＊flowers Flower Comics α＊

Yumi Tamura
田村由美

7SEEDS
セブンシーズ

27

TEAM SUMMER B
ARASHI AOTA

YOUNG MAN WITH A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE. HE'S ETERNALLY IN LOVE WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND, HANA.

TEAM SUMMER B
NATSU IWASHIMIZU

A TIMID AND WELL-MANNERED GIRL. SHE'S AFRAID OF VOICING HER OWN OPINIONS.

TEAM WINTER
TAKAHIRO ARAMAKI

FORMER HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL PLAYER WHO'S BEEN WANDERING AROUND ON HIS OWN FOR MORE THAN FIFTEEN YEARS. HE'S VERY SENSITIVE.

TEAM SPRING
HANA SUGURONO

YOUNG WOMAN WHO'S WELL VERSED IN OUTDOOR SURVIVAL. SHE'S THE GIRLFRIEND OF ARASHI FROM TEAM SUMMER B.

TEAM SUMMER B
MOZU

HE'S THE ORIGINATOR OF "PROJECT SEVEN SEEDS," AND HAS BEEN OBSERVING THE MOVEMENTS OF ALL THE TEAMS.

TEAM SUMMER B
SEMIMARU ASAI

EGOISTIC, FOUL-MOUTHED, YOUNG MAN. HE'S ALWAYS MEAN TO NATSU.

TEAM SUMMER A
AYU

SHE'S AN EXPERT ON PLANTS. SHE'S STARTED TO CARE ABOUT ARAMAKI.

TEAM SPRING
HIBARI NIIGUSA

SUCCESSOR OF THE HEAD FAMILY OF A LINEAGE OF SPIRITUALISTIC MEDIUMS. SHE'S A RELATIVE OF HOTARU'S.

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7 SEEDS (セブンシーズ) 27

flowers: フラワーコミックスα

ORY STORY STORY STORY STORY STORY STORY STORY

A HUGE METEORITE HAS COLLIDED WITH THE EARTH, AND THE HUMAN RACE WAS ELIMINATED. THE GOVERNMENT, WHO HAD FORESEEN THIS WORST CASE SCENARIO, TOOK A CERTAIN COUNTERMEASURE: PROJECT SEVEN SEEDS, FOR WHICH 5 TEAMS OF SEVEN TALENTED AND CAREFULLY SELECTED BOYS AND GIRLS WERE BUILT AND PUT INTO COLD SLEEP TO SECURE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE HUMAN RACE.

WHEN THE YOUNG PEOPLE AWOKE IN A WORLD IN THE FUTURE, THEY WERE EXPOSED TO A SEVERE ENVIRONMENT. AS THEY STRUGGLED FOR SURVIVAL, THEY WENT THROUGH PARTINGS FROM AND ENCOUNTERS WITH THEIR FRIENDS.

HANA, WHO'D BEEN SWEPT AWAY IN A RAPID STREAM AND MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED, MET FUJIKO AND CHISA AGAIN. ARAMAKI AND AYU, WHO'D SET OUT ON A JOURNEY TO SEARCH FOR HANA, ALSO JOINED THE GROUP. AFTER HANA AND THE OTHERS ESCAPED FROM A FOREST FIRE WHICH WAS CAUSED BY LIGHTNING, THEY RAN INTO TSUNOMATA AND HIBARI. MEANWHILE, THE MIXTURE OF TEAMS, WHO'D ALSO FLED FROM THE FIRE, TOOK SHELTER ON A SMALL ISLAND. SOON AFTERWARD, THE PEOPLE FROM TEAM SUMMER B LANDED ON THAT ISLAND TOO. IT WAS CALLED "KAGIJIMA," AND IT WAS CONNECTED TO THE SHELTER ON SADO ISLAND. BUT THEY WERE SCATTERED UNDERGROUND, WHICH HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A NEST WITH A CRISSCROSS OF CHANNELS BY HUGE ANTS, AND EACH OF THEM MET WITH THEIR OWN TRIALS. AT THE SAME TIME, HANA AND GREW WHO'D CHASED OVER TO SADO ISLAND, HEADED HOME, STARTED EXPLORING THE ISLAND, WHICH SHAPE HAD CHANGED COMPLETELY.

7SEEDS (セブンシーズ) 27

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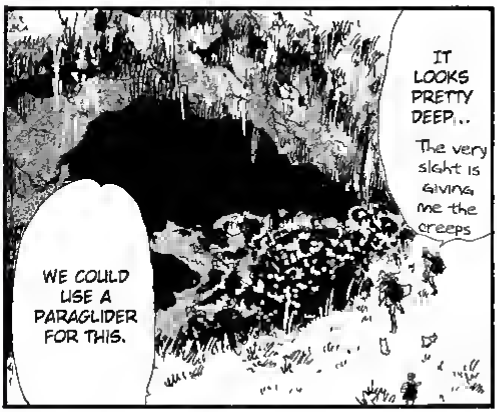
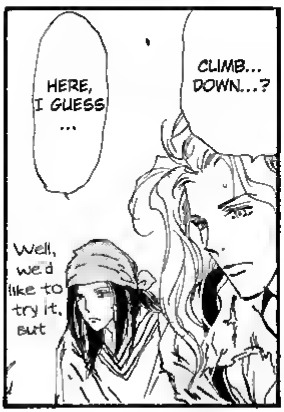
Mountains Chapter 2

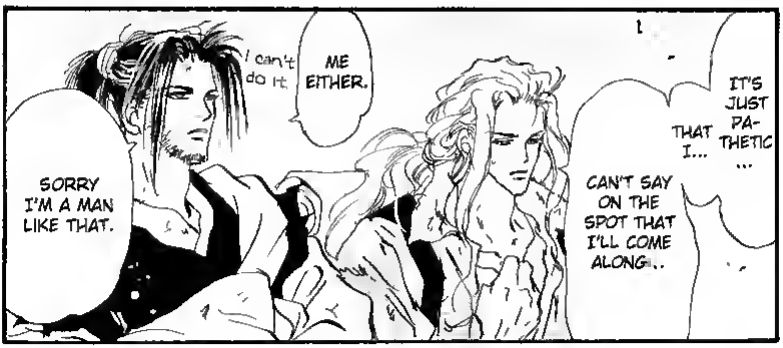
【－Contact－】

Rain over Paradise
https://rp-rain.blogspot.com

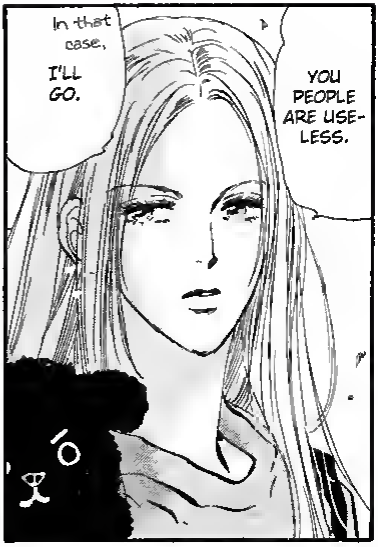
CAN I CLIMB DOWN IT, ONLY RELYING ON THE STRENGTH OF MY ARMS AND LEGS?
I DON'T HAVE A LONG ROPE I CAN TRUST.

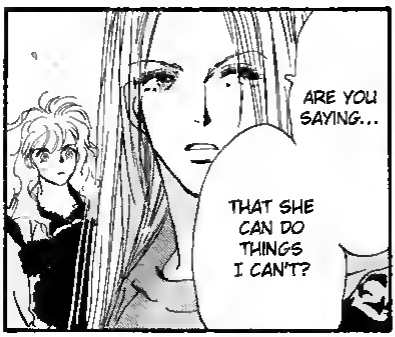

IT LOOKS PRETTY DEEP...
The very sight is giving me the creeps
WE COULD USE A PARAGLIDER FOR THIS.


CLIMB... DOWN...?
HERE, I GUESS ...
Well, we'd like to try it, but

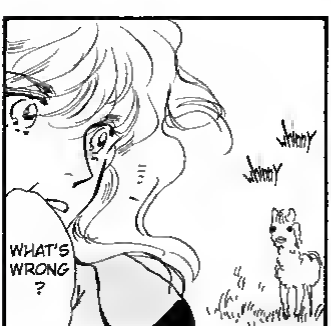

I can't do it
ME EITHER.
SORRY I'M A MAN LIKE THAT.
IT'S JUST PA-THETIC ...
THAT I...
CAN'T SAY ON THE SPOT THAT I'LL COME ALONG..

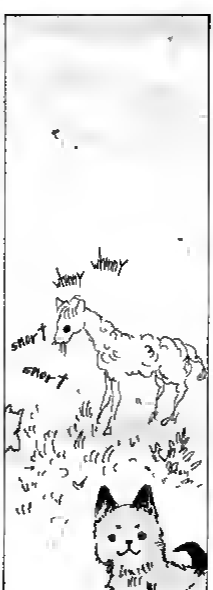
WHAT?
HUH? CAN YOU DO IT? Hana is very skillful, you know


In that case, I'LL GO.
YOU PEOPLE ARE USE-LESS.

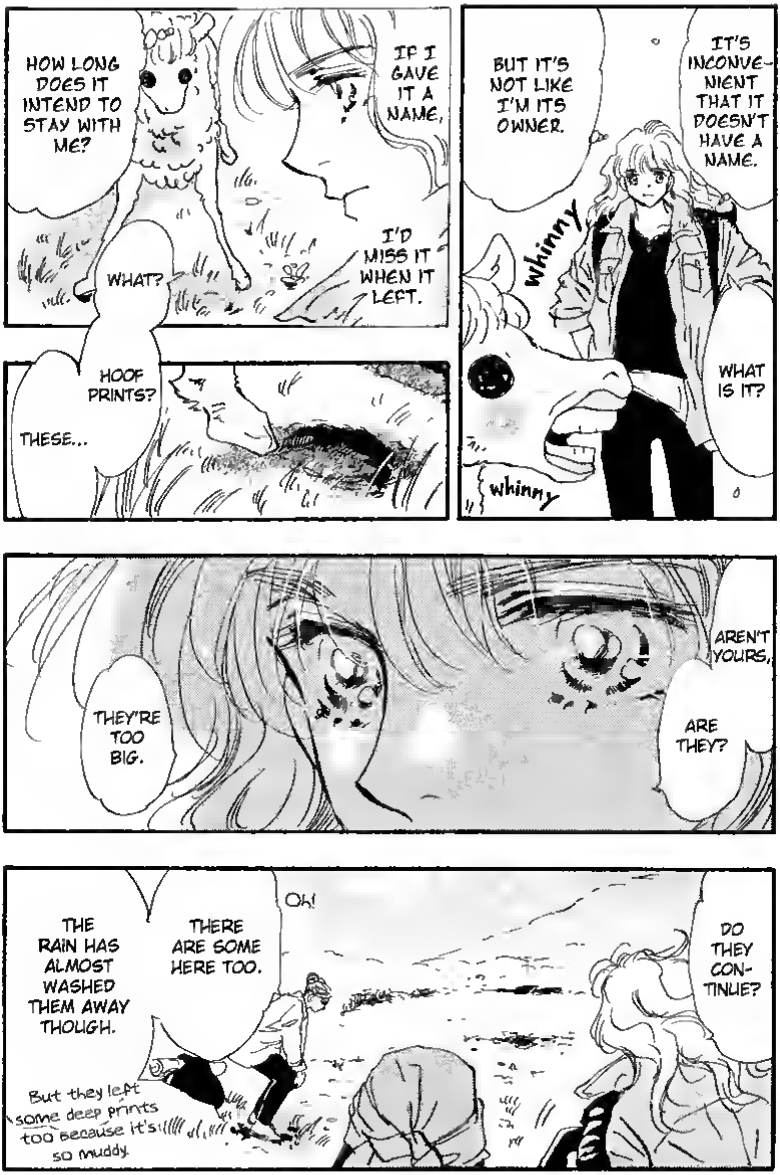

ARE YOU SAYING...
THAT SHE CAN DO THINGS I CAN'T?

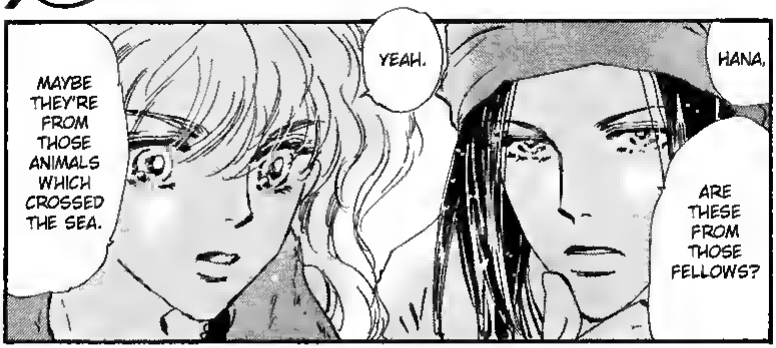
whinny


WHAT'S WRONG?
whinny
whinny

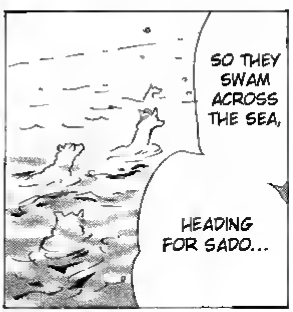

whinny
whinny
snort
snort

HEH! Even though she doesn't know the "Evening Crane?
ALLEGEDLY, TEAM SUMMER A IS SUPERIOR.
In many respects
THAT'S AMAZING.

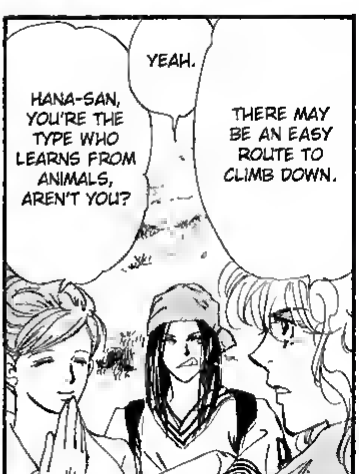

HOW LONG DOES IT INTEND TO STAY WITH ME?
IF I GAVE IT A NAME,
I'D MISS IT WHEN IT LEFT.
WHAT?
HOOF PRINTS?
THESE...
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ITS OWNER.
IT'S INCONVENIENT THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE A NAME.
whinny
WHAT IS IT?
whinny
THEY'RE TOO BIG.
AREN'T YOURS,
ARE THEY?
THE RAIN HAS ALMOST WASHED THEM AWAY THOUGH.
THERE ARE SOME HERE TOO.
Oh!
DO THEY CONTINUE?
But they left some deep prints too because it's so muddy.


HANA,
ARE THESE FROM THOSE FELLOWS?
YEAH.
MAYBE THEY'RE FROM THOSE ANIMALS WHICH CROSSED THE SEA.

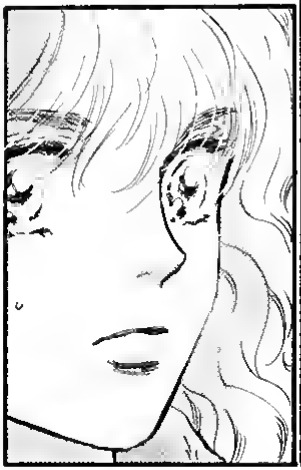
AND ...
WHERE DID THEY GO THEN?
PERHAPS DOWN THERE?

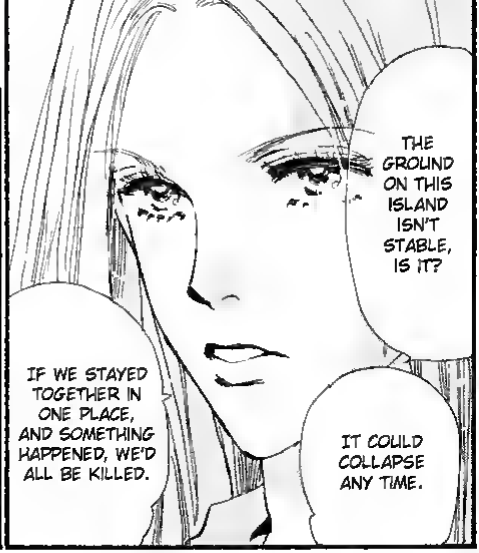

SO THEY SWAM ACROSS THE SEA,
HEADING FOR SADO...

OKAY!
SHALL WE TRY TO TRACK THE HOOF PRINTS?
NO.

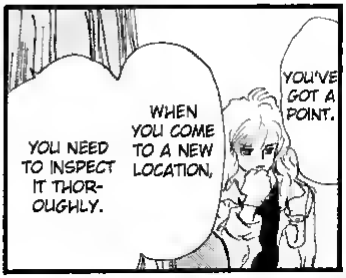

YEAH.
HANA-SAN, YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO LEARNS FROM ANIMALS, AREN'T YOU?
THERE MAY BE AN EASY ROUTE TO CLIMB DOWN.

I WANT TO EXPLORE THESE PARTS OF THE ISLAND.
I'D LIKE TO STUDY THE VEGETATION FIRST.
WE CAN ALWAYS CLIMB DOWN AFTERWARDS, CAN'T WE?
YOU SAID THAT IT WAS FURTHER TO THE WEST, RIGHT?
YES.
There won't be any houses left! though.
I WANT TO STOP BY AT MY NEIGHBOURHOOD.
For starters.
THEN,
LET'S SPLIT INTO THREE GROUPS.
We also need to find food
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS ISLAND TOO.
AYU-SAN,
WE...
CAN'T DO THAT.
WE MUSTN'T SEPARATE.
WE MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO MEET AGAIN.
HANA-SAN, ARE YOU STUPID, OR WHAT?

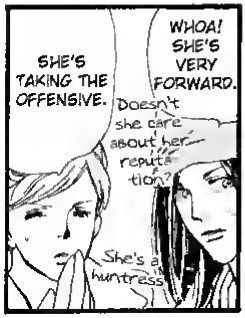



THE GROUND ON THIS ISLAND ISN'T STABLE, IS IT?
IF WE STAYED TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE, AND SOMETHING HAPPENED, WE'D ALL BE KILLED.
IT COULD COLLAPSE ANY TIME.

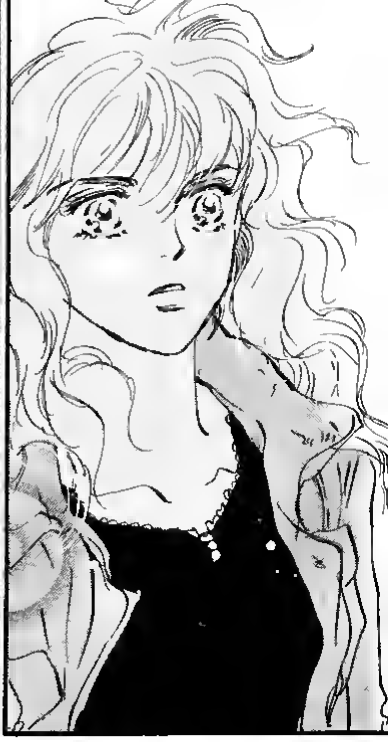
TAKA-SAN AND I...
WILL EXPLORE THESE SURROUNDINGS.

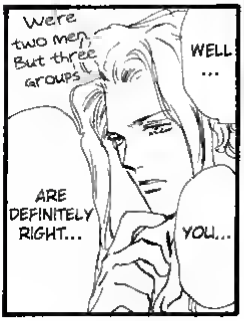

YOU'VE GOT A POINT.
WHEN YOU COME TO A NEW LOCATION,
YOU NEED TO INSPECT IT THOROUGHLY.

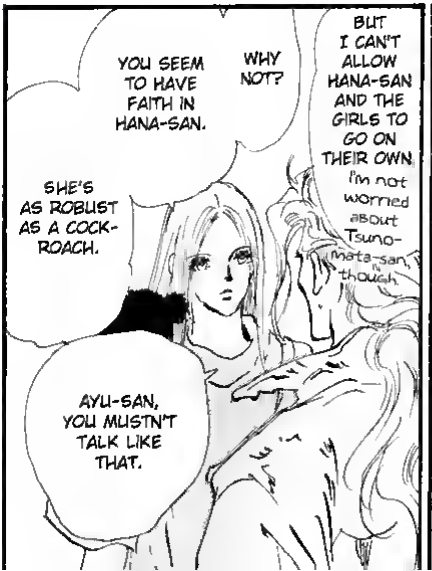
HANA-SAN AND THE GIRLS CAN GO SOUTH AND TRACK THOSE HOOF PRINTS.
THAT'S WHY YOU TWO... SHOULD GO TO THE WEST.
Stop ordering me around.

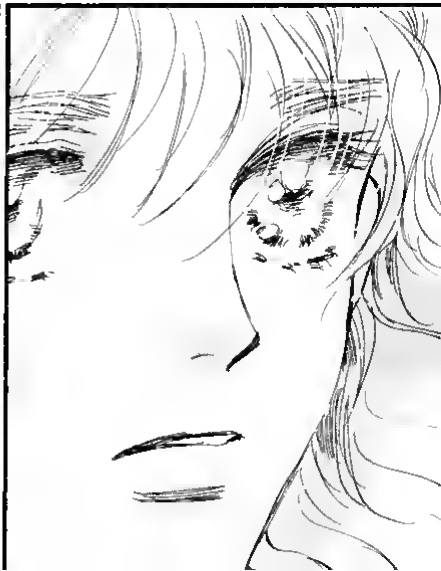

WHOA! SHE'S VERY FORWARD.
SHE'S TAKING THE OFFENSIVE.
Doesn't she care about her reputation?
She's a huntress.

TOGETHER WITH ARAMAKI-SAN?
THE TWO OF THEM?!



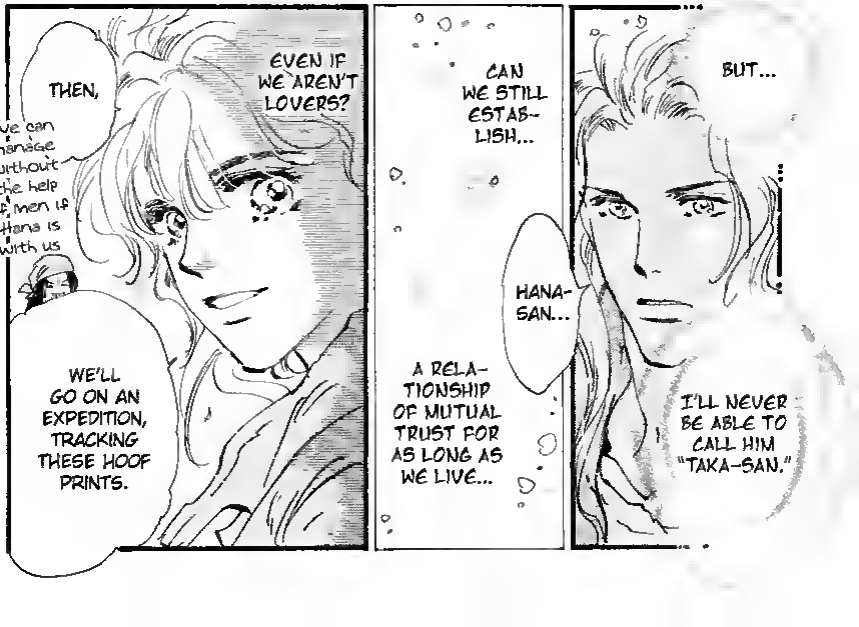

Were two men. But three groups!
WELL...
ARE DEFINITELY RIGHT...
YOU...

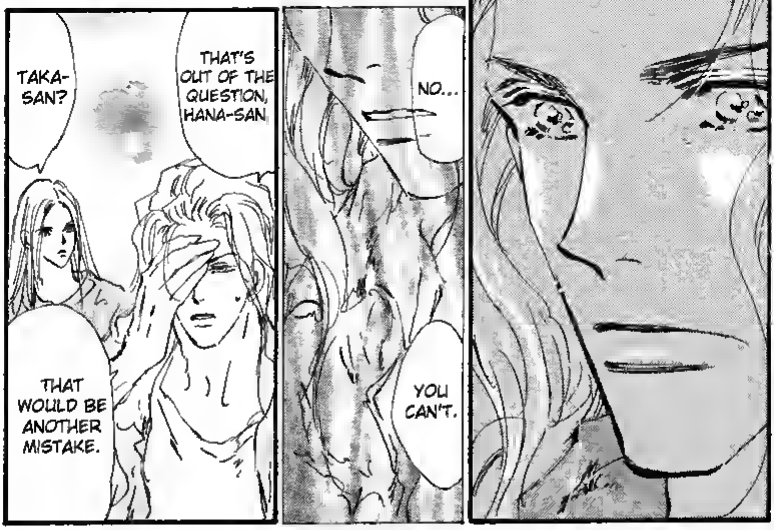

BUT I CAN'T ALLOW HANA-SAN AND THE GIRLS TO GO ON THEIR OWN.
I'm not worried about Tsunomata-san, though.
WHY NOT?
YOU SEEM TO HAVE FAITH IN HANA-SAN.
SHE'S AS ROBUST AS A COCKROACH.
AYU-SAN, YOU MUSTN'T TALK LIKE THAT.

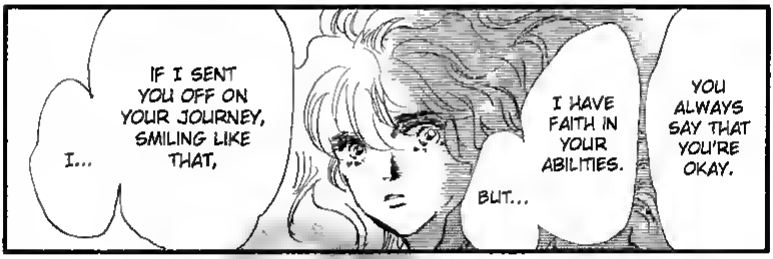


THEY GET ALONG WELL.
That's one way to put it. It sounds like a lover's quarrel.
Unsophisticated?
NO,
I JUST MEAN THAT YOU'RE QUITE UNSOPHISTICATED.
WHY?
I WAS COMPLIMENTING HER. I JUST WANTED TO SHOW MY RESPECT.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
IS THIS ACHE IN MY CHEST?
WHAT...
sigh
I WANT TO MEET HIM SOON.
BUT STILL...
I HAVE ARASHI.
I LOVE HIM.

IT'S OKAY.
I'LL BE FINE.
cock-roaches are tough!
Yeah!
AND HOLDING MYSELF OFF...
I WON'T DENY FEELING DRAWN TOWARDS ARAMAKI-SAN,


THEN,
We can manage without the help of men if Hana is with us
EVEN IF WE AREN'T LOVERS?
WE'LL GO ON AN EXPEDITION, TRACKING THESE HOOF PRINTS.
CAN WE STILL ESTAB-LISH,...
A RELA-TIONSHIP OF MUTUAL TRUST FOR AS LONG AS WE LIVE...
HANA-SAN...
BUT...
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO CALL HIM "TAKA-SAN."


TAKA-SAN?
THAT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION, HANA-SAN.
THAT WOULD BE ANOTHER MISTAKE.
NO...
YOU CAN'T.

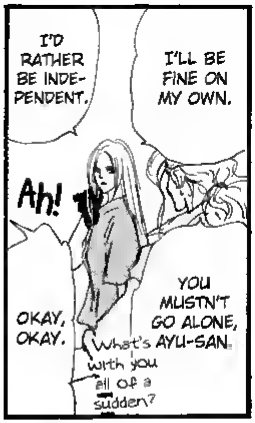

I...
IF I SENT YOU OFF ON YOUR JOURNEY, SMILING LIKE THAT,
BUT...
I HAVE FAITH IN YOUR ABILITIES.
YOU ALWAYS SAY THAT YOU'RE OKAY.

I NEVER WANT TO FEEL THAT WAY AGAIN.
REGRET IT TERRIBLY LATER.
I'D...

BECAUSE THIS TIME,
I WANT TO PROTECT YOU.
LET'S STAY TOGETHER,
WHER-EVER WE GO.
HELP?
FROM THESE PEOPLE?
I DON'T NEED IT-
EVEN IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN,
AYU-SAN, YOU TOO.
Let's go.
IF WE STICK TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER.
I'LL COME WITH YOU.

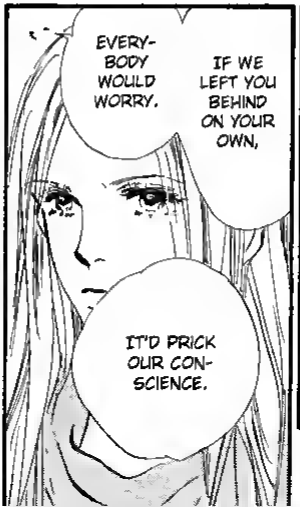
WHAT?
I'LL STAY WITH YOU, TSUNOTCHI.
NO.

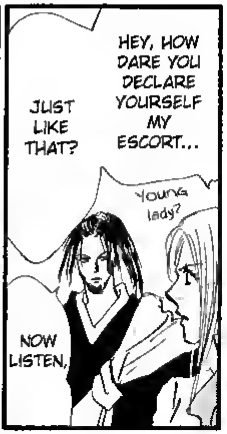
THEN,
I'LL ACCOMPANY THE YOUNG LADY.
HIBARI, YOU GO WITH HANA.

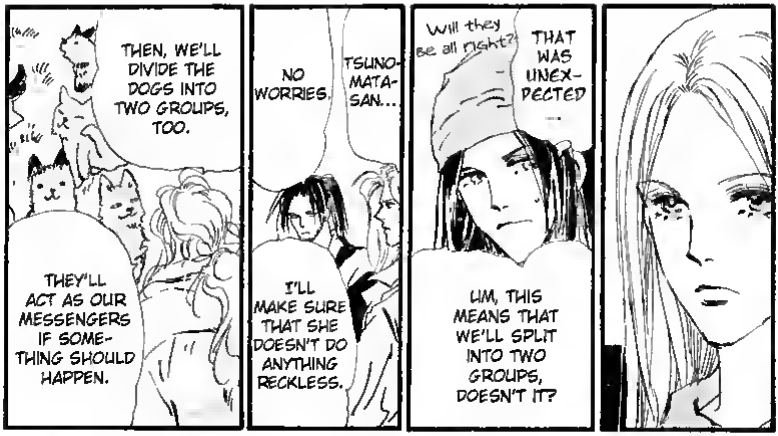

I'D RATHER BE INDEPENDENT.
I'LL BE FINE ON MY OWN.
Ah!
OKAY, OKAY.
YOU MUSTN'T GO ALONE, AYU-SAN.
What's with you all of a sudden?

I'M NOT IN A HURRY TO GET HOME, SO IT'S OKAY IF IT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER.
There won't be anything left anyway
BECAUSE YOU DO AS I SAY MORE OFTEN THAN NOT.

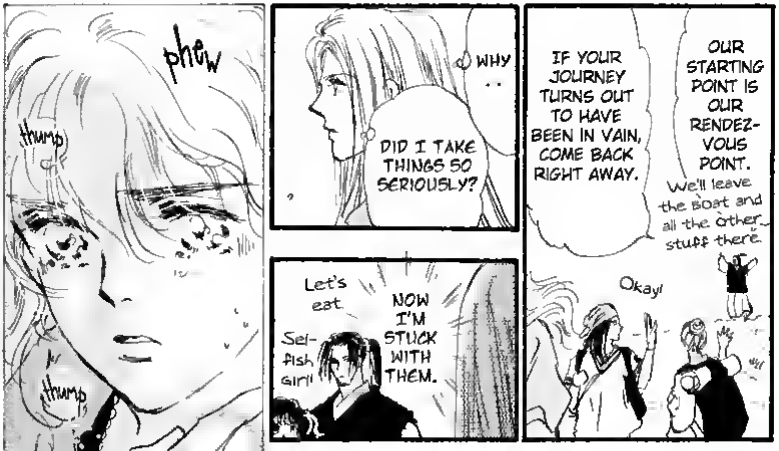
YOU NEED TO TAKE SOMETHING LIKE THAT INTO CONSIDERATION TOO.
IF YOU'RE SO SUPERIOR.


EVERYBODY WOULD WORRY.
IF WE LEFT YOU BEHIND ON YOUR OWN,
IT'D PRICK OUR CONSCIENCE.

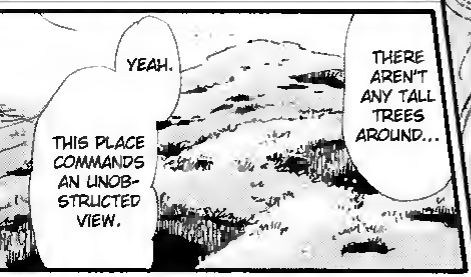

HEY, HOW DARE YOU DECLARE YOURSELF MY ESCORT...
JUST LIKE THAT?
Young lady?
NOW LISTEN,


THEN, WE'LL DIVIDE THE DOGS INTO TWO GROUPS, TOO.
THEY'LL ACT AS OUR MESSENGERS IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN.
NO WORRIES.
TSUNOMATA-SAN...
I'LL MAKE SURE THAT SHE DOESN'T DO ANYTHING RECKLESS.
Will they be all right?
THAT WAS UNEXPECTED...
UM, THIS MEANS THAT WE'LL SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS, DOESN'T IT?

BE CAREFUL.
PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF KURODA.
AYU-SAN,


phew
thump
thump
WHY..
DID I TAKE THINGS SO SERIOUSLY?
Let's eat.
NOW I'M STUCK WITH THEM.
Selfish girl!
IF YOUR JOURNEY TURNS OUT TO HAVE BEEN IN VAIN, COME BACK RIGHT AWAY.
OUR STARTING POINT IS OUR RENDEZ-VOUS POINT.
We'll leave the boat and all the other stuff there.
Okay!

hah fuh hah
fuh
Come on, calm down
fff

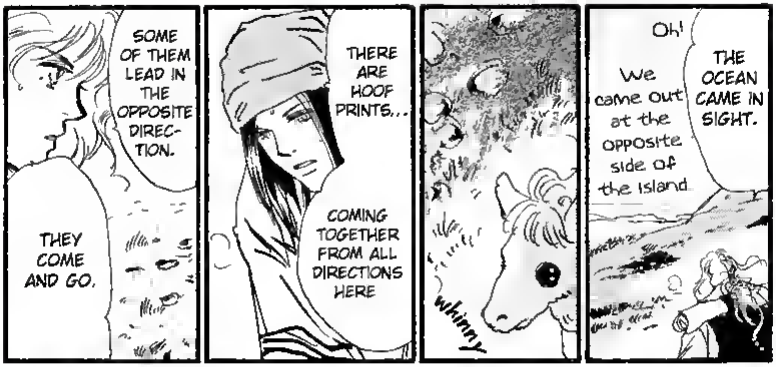

YEAH.
THIS PLACE COMMANDS AN UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW.
THERE AREN'T ANY TALL TREES AROUND...

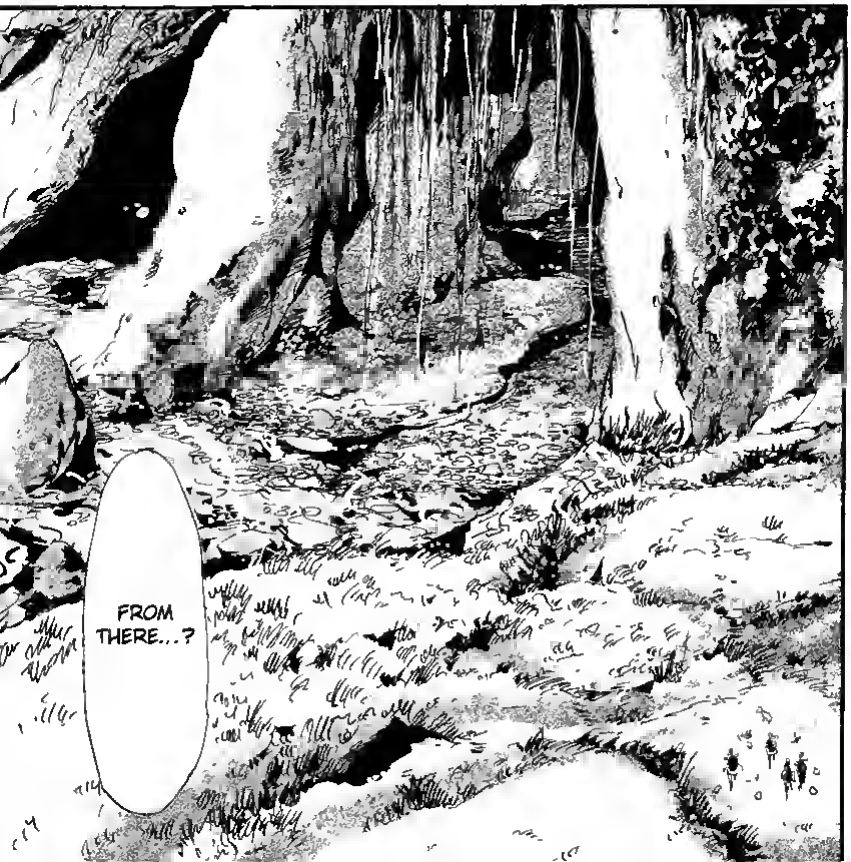
Don't worry I'm fine Did it crumble?
Careful
WE HAVE...
TO STAY FOCUSED

IT SEEMS THE TREES ARE BELOW...
FUJI-KO-CHAN!
OOPS!
clatter

MY HEART IS RACING.
NO,
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
I WONDER...
HOW ARAMAKI-SAN FEELS ABOUT ME.
thump
thump
thump
I HAVE TO PUT AN END TO IT...!

I MADE UP MY MIND TO EXPLORE THIS WORLD...
DESPITE THAT.
WE...
MIGHT ACCIDENTALLY RELEASE SOMETHING DANGEROUS ONCE MORE.
WE...
MAY BE BURIED ALIVE AGAIN
I NEED TO FIND OUT...
THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF SADO.
EVEN IF YOU'RE CAUTIOUS,
YOU MUSTN'T BE NERVOUS,
HANA-SAN.
Because you'll tense up
YES.
He saw right through me.

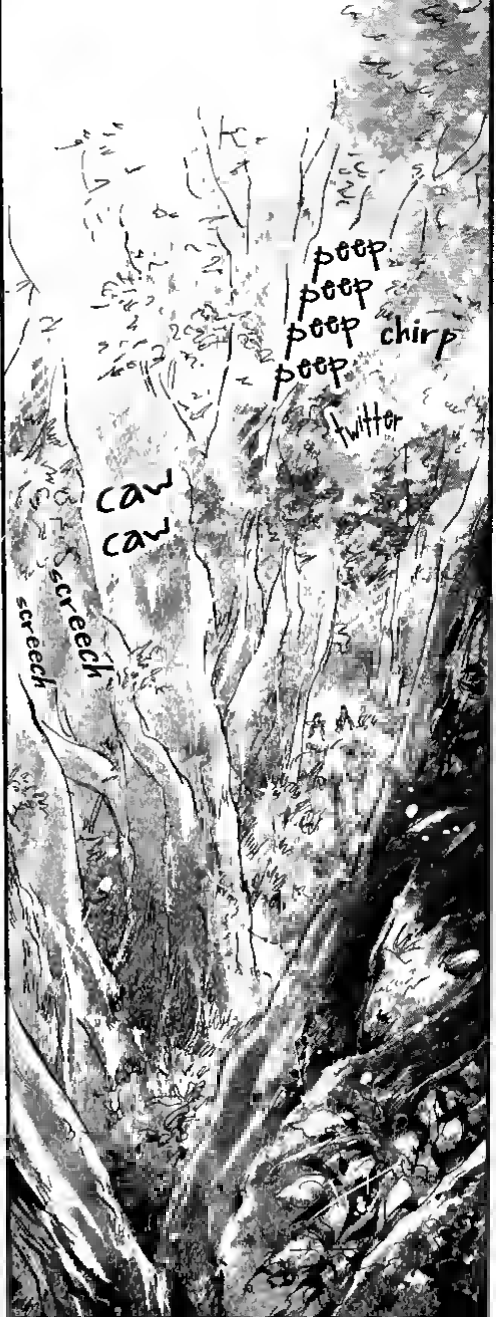

SOME OF THEM LEAD IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
THEY COME AND GO.
THERE ARE HOOF PRINTS...
COMING TOGETHER FROM ALL DIRECTIONS HERE
whinny
Oh!
We came out at the opposite side of the island
THE OCEAN CAME IN SIGHT.


FROM THERE...?

SSHH

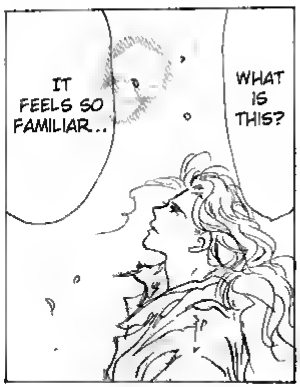
AMAZ-
ING...
THERE'S A FOREST AND A RIVER HERE.

BUT THE SURFACE IS OVER-HEAD.

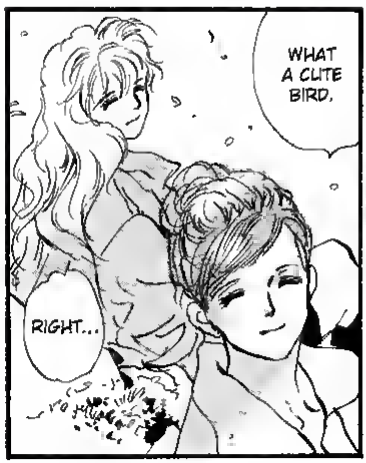

peep
peep
peep
peep
chirp
twitter
caw
caw
screech
screech

IT'S PLEAS-ANT.
THE AIR FEELS PURE.

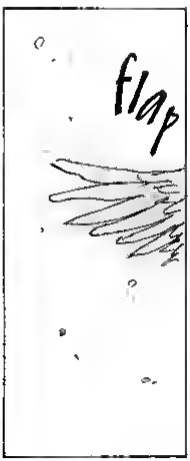
IT'S SOLEMN.
LIKE INSIDE A CHURCH...

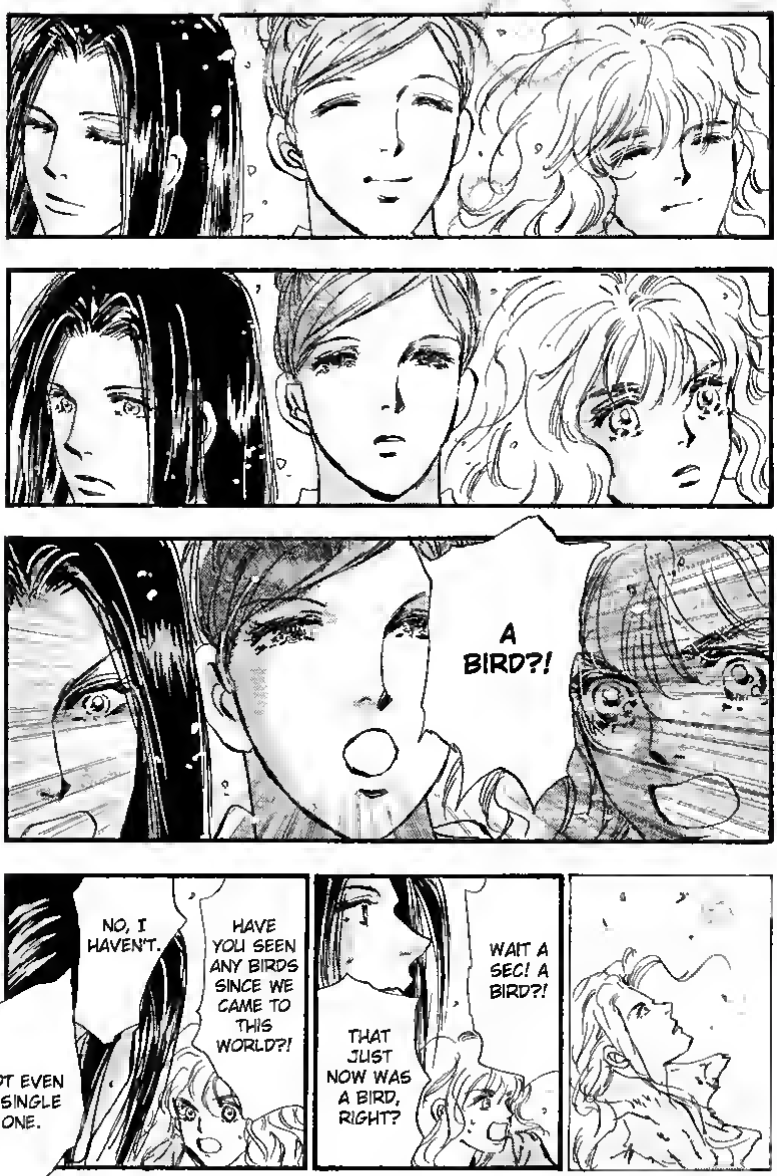

IT FEELS SO FAMILIAR..
WHAT IS THIS?

caw
peep
peep
peep
twitter
twitter
peep
chirp
chirp

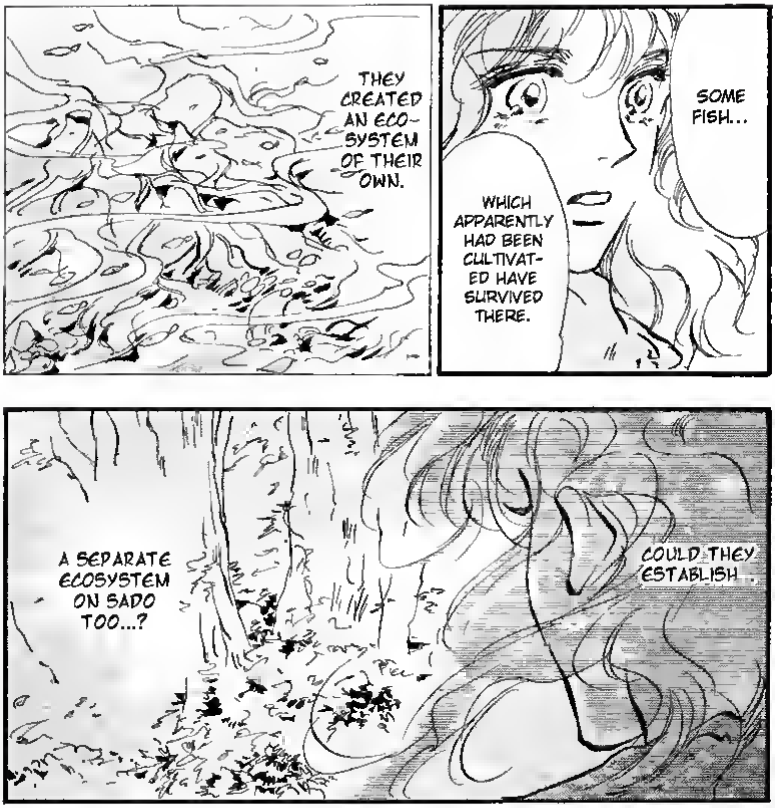

WHAT A CUTE BIRD.
RIGHT...

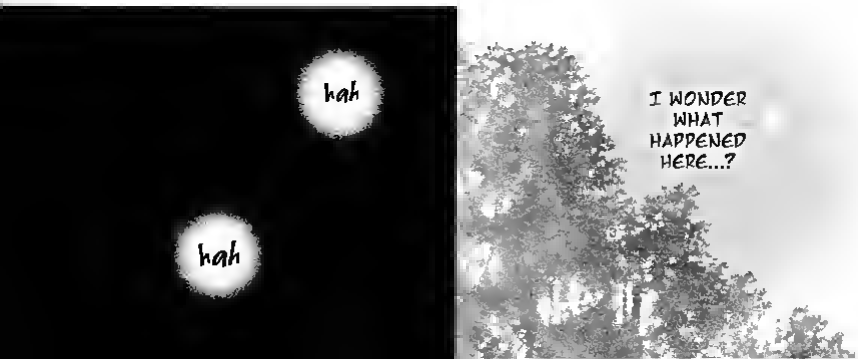
flutter
peep, twitter


flap

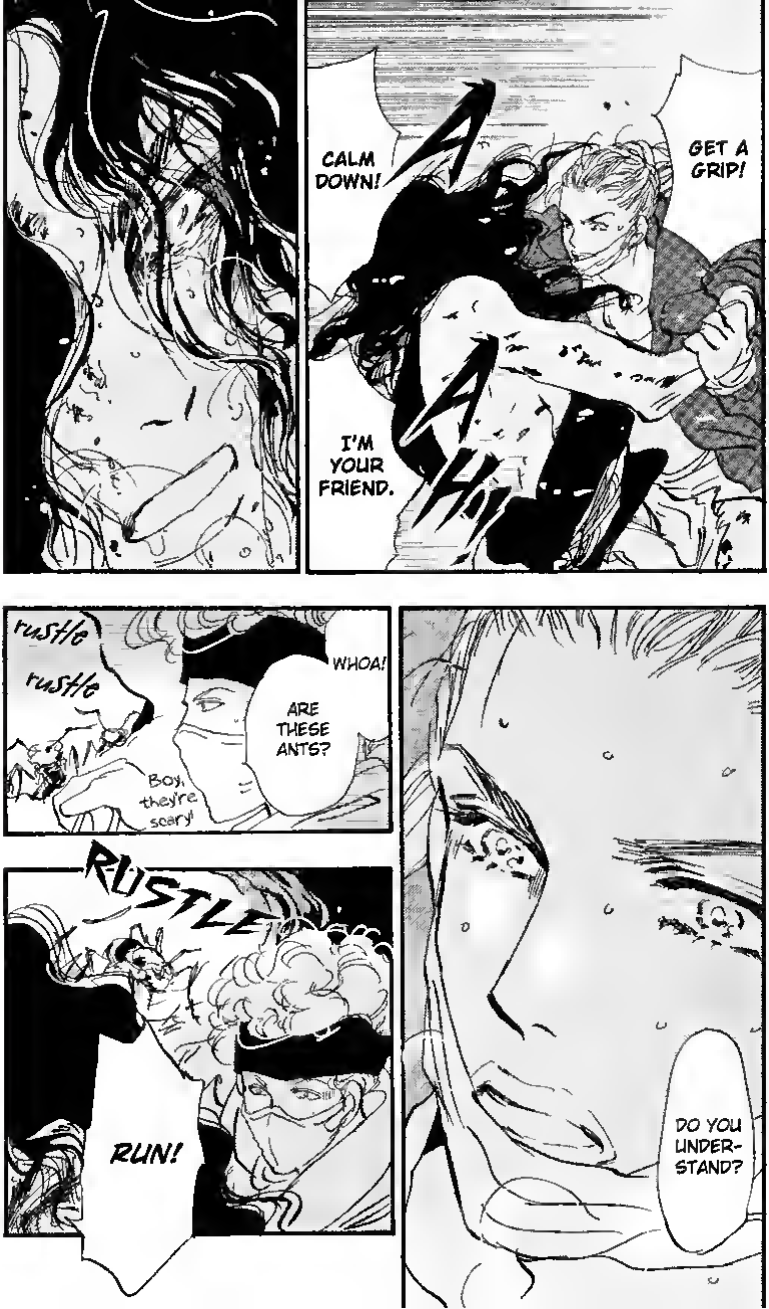

A BIRD?!
WAIT A SEC! A BIRD?!
THAT JUST NOW WAS A BIRD, RIGHT?
HAVE YOU SEEN ANY BIRDS SINCE WE CAME TO THIS WORLD?!
NO, I HAVEN'T.
NOT EVEN A SINGLE ONE.

peep
caw peep
peep
chirp
twitter
chirp
twitter
I SEE.
THERE ARE BIRDS HERE..
I HAVEN'T HEARD ANY CHIRPING,
OR SEEN THE SHADE OF A BIRD FLYING IN THE AIR, EITHER.
I THOUGHT THERE WEREN'T ANY OF THEM AROUND ANYMORE.
splash
NO...
WE HAVE SEEN SOME
IN THE SHELTER IN THE WEST.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
ONLY HUGE, STRANGE-LOOKING DEEP-SEA FISH...
What?
RIGHT.
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY FISH HERE AT ALL EITHER.
AH..
THERE ARE FISH TOO?!


THEY CREATED AN ECO-SYSTEM OF THEIR OWN.
SOME FISH...
WHICH APPARENTLY HAD BEEN CULTIVAT-ED HAVE SURVIVED THERE.
A SEPARATE ECOSYSTEM ON SADO TOO...?
COULD THEY ESTABLISH...


hah
hah
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED HERE...?

HEY!
YOU!
hah
hah
hah
hah
hah
hah
WHOOAA!


CALM DOWN!
GET A GRIP!
I'M YOUR FRIEND.
AHH!
rustle
rustle
WHOA!
ARE THESE ANTS?
Boy, they're scary!
RUSTLE
RUN!
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?

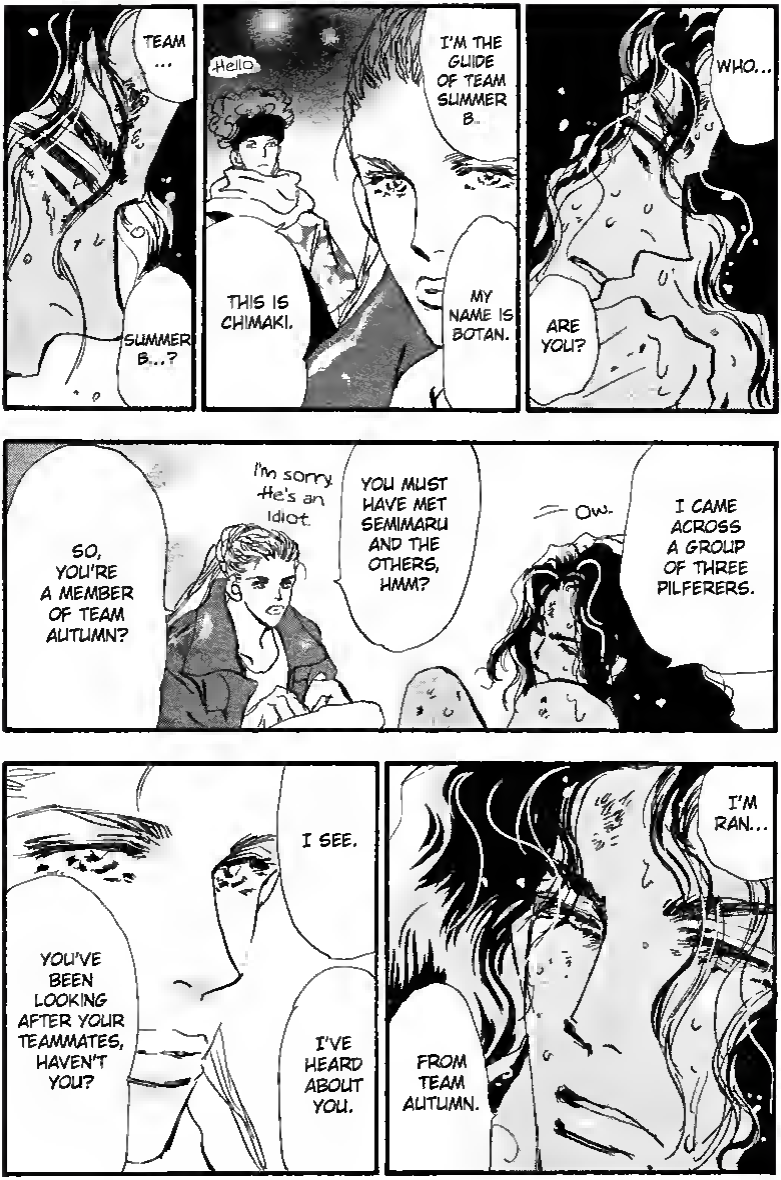
CRUNCH

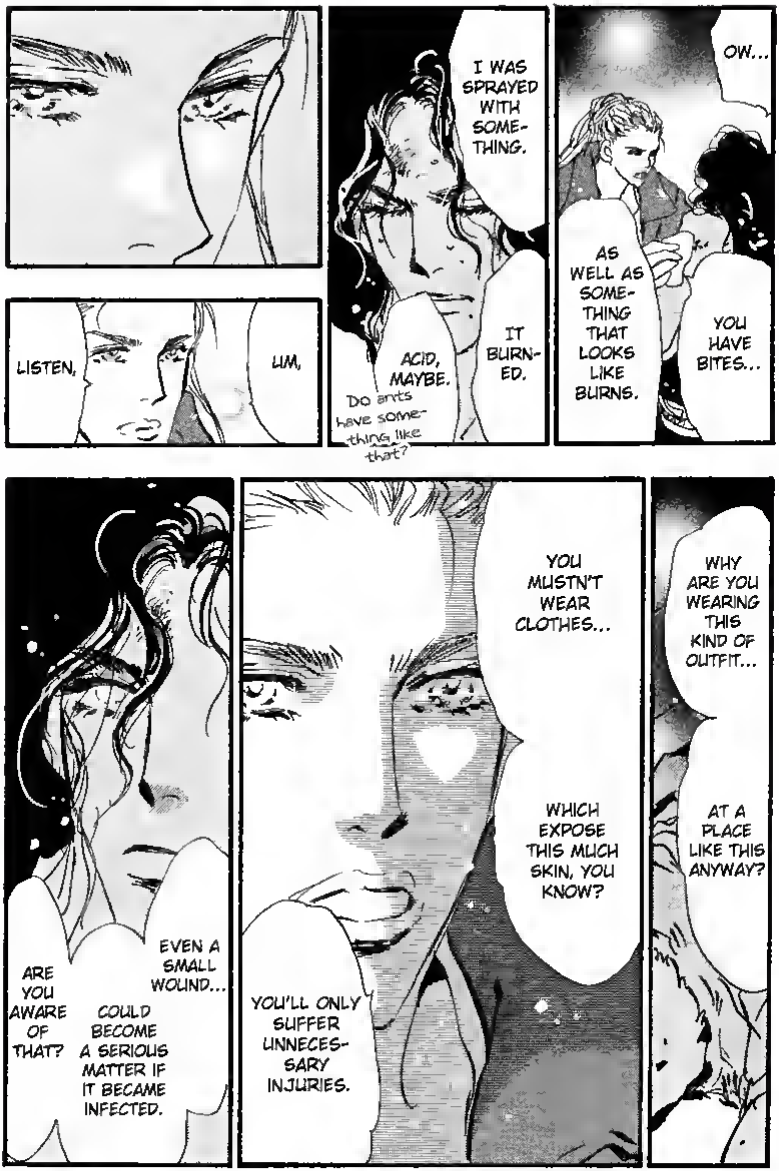
rustle
rustle
slide

COME OVER HERE!

WHAT IS THAT ...?
slide
My, my.
THE ANTS ...
ARE RUN-NING OFF.
WHAT ...?
NEVER MIND THAT!

ARE YOU OKAY?
WERE YOU BITTEN?
HOW BAD.. ARE YOUR INJURIES?
SIT DOWN HERE.
hah hah
SS#
DAMN.
THEY TORE ME APART.
S#+
I'M SURE IT'LL HURT,
BUT YOU NEED TO RINSE THEM OUT
IS THIS FRESH WATER?
FIRST, WASH YOURSELF.


TEAM ...
SUMMER B...?
Hello.
I'M THE GUIDE OF TEAM SUMMER B.
THIS IS CHIMAKI.
MY NAME IS BOTAN.
WHO...
ARE YOU?
SO, YOU'RE A MEMBER OF TEAM AUTUMN?
I'm sorry. He's an idiot.
YOU MUST HAVE MET SEMIMARU AND THE OTHERS, HMM?
Ow.
I CAME ACROSS A GROUP OF THREE PILFERERS.
I SEE.
YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AFTER YOUR TEAMMATES, HAVEN'T YOU?
I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU.
I'M RAN...
FROM TEAM AUTUMN.

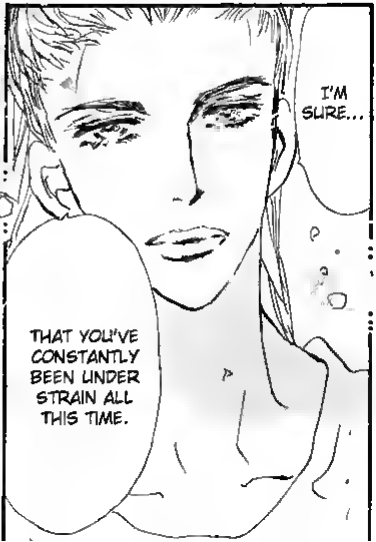

OW...
YOU HAVE BITES...
AS WELL AS SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE BURNS.
I WAS SPRAYED WITH SOMETHING.
IT BURNED.
ACID, MAYBE.
Do ants have something like that?
LISTEN,
UM,
WHY ARE YOU WEARING THIS KIND OF OUTFIT...
AT A PLACE LIKE THIS ANYWAY?
YOU MUSTN'T WEAR CLOTHES...
WHICH EXPOSE THIS MUCH SKIN, YOU KNOW?
YOU'LL ONLY SUFFER UNNECESSARY INJURIES.
ARE YOU AWARE OF THAT?
EVEN A SMALL WOUND... COULD BECOME A SERIOUS MATTER IF IT BECAME INFECTED.

PUT THIS ON.
IT'LL GET CHILLY HERE TOO.
YOUR BODY WILL COOL AS WELL.
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST KNOW WHAT'S BAD FOR YOU.
WHAT?

I HEARD THAT YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN HERE FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
AND YOU...
BECAME THEIR LEADER, DIDN'T YOU?

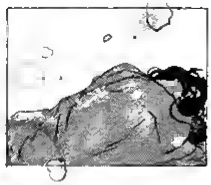
OH,
I JUST THOUGHT ...
THAT I'D NEVER BE SCOLDED...
BY AN OLDER WOMAN AGAIN.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN ROUGH.


I'M SURE...
THAT YOU'VE CONSTANTLY BEEN UNDER STRAIN ALL THIS TIME.

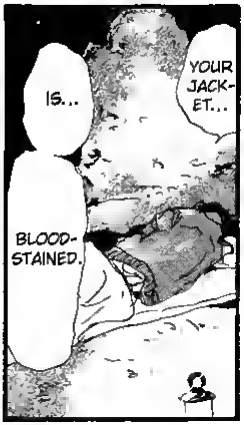
NO...
NOT IN PARTIC-ULAR.
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT.
tee hee
I GUESS THAT I'M THE OLDEST WOMAN HERE.
THAT'S WHY YOU SHOULD FEEL REASSUR-ED...
Close it properly.
AND RELAX.
AND TAKE SOME REST.
I'LL BE HERE.

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.



CHI-MAKI,

I DON'T HAVE ANY CLOTHES WHICH AREN'T STAINED.


YOUR JACK-ET..
IS..
BLOOD-STAINED.

caw
poop
poop
poop
hum

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
This woman
SHE IS WELL PROPOR-TIONED.

FUJIKO-CHAN,
DID YOU JUST HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT?
I ONLY HEAR THE CHIRPING OF BIRDS AND THE HUMMING OF INSECTS.
THERE WAS...
SOME METALLIC SOUND...
THERE ARE LOTS OF INSECTS AROUND TOO.
pppp
pppp
pppp
OR WHEN THERE'S A FOREST FIRE.
THE ANIMALS COME HERE DURING THE DRY SEASON...
WHILE, DURING THE RAINY SEASON...
IT HAS A ROOF...
hep
CON-CRETE ...?

IT'S JUST SOME NOISE.
NO, IT MUST BE MY IMAGINATION.
tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok
IT FELT LIKE IT HAD A RHYTHM...
A RHYTHM? WHAT KIND OF?
IT ALMOST SOUNDED LIKE THE THEME WHEN YOU WIN A BATTLE IN FF
MAYBE SOMETHING WAS CLATTERING IN THE WIND.
peep
chirp

THE THEME OF FF IS USELESS.
You can't produce high or low sounds
THERE ISN'T ANYBODY NEARBY.
HOW TO SEND AN SOS.
I SHOULD HAVE LEARNED...
From Ryo-chin
IT'S NO GOOD, AFTER ALL.
NOBODY WILL HEAR SOME-THING LIKE MUSIC.
clank
WE WERE CARRIED PRETTY FAR.
WHERE IS THIS PLACE?
Damn it!

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●作品紹介

★人類の滅亡を阻止すべく敢行された「7SEEDS」計画。冷凍睡眠から目覚めた若者らは、過酷なサバイバルを続ける…。佐渡島へとつながる「葉島」に渡った者たちは、その地下で、それぞれ違う坑道に迷い込み、厳しい闘いを強いられる。一方、佐渡島に上陸した者たちは、激変した島の探索を始めるが…

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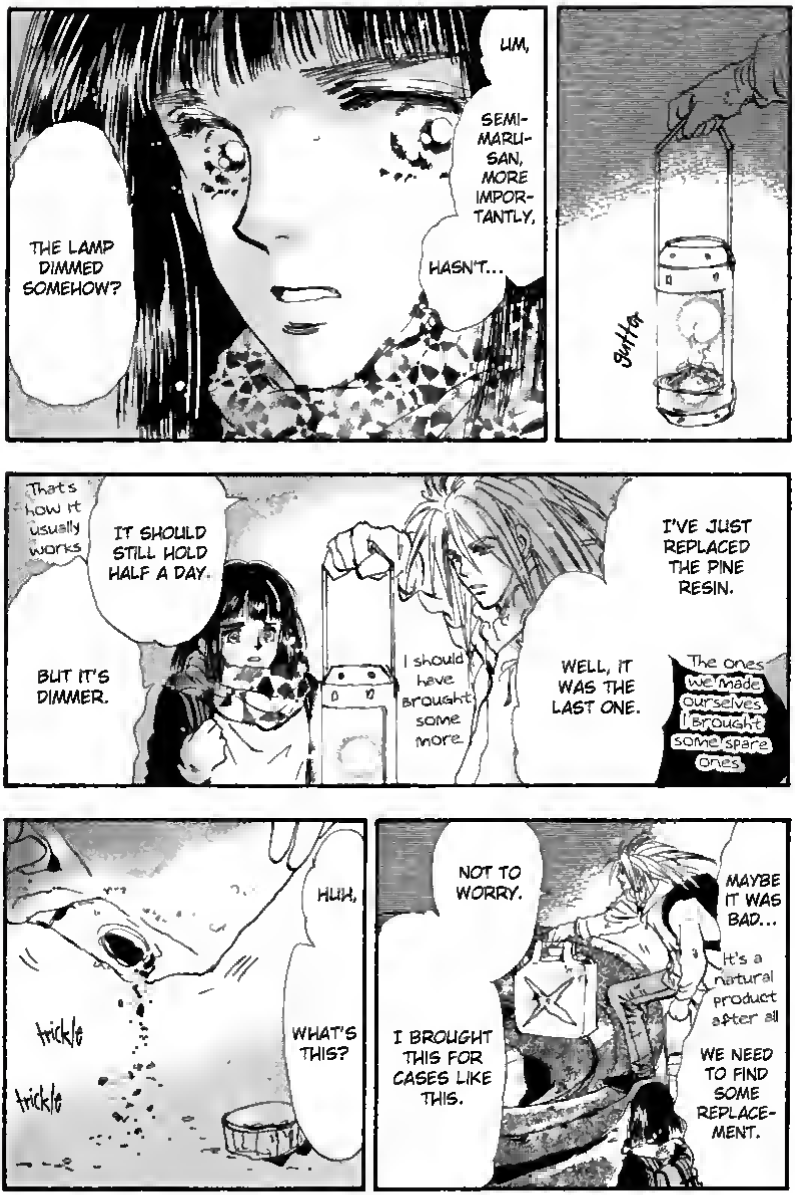
Mountains Chapter 3
【—Hope—】
IT LOOKS PRETTY HUGE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
Man!
I'M WORN OUT.
I HOPE THAT WE CAN GET TO THE SURFACE SOMEWHERE...
Rain Over Paradise
http://rp-fans.livejournal.com


UM,
SEMI-MARU-SAN, MORE IMPOR-TANTLY,
HASN'T...
THE LAMP DIMMED SOMEHOW?
Sniff sniff
That's how it usually works
IT SHOULD STILL HOLD HALF A DAY.
BUT IT'S DIMMER.
I should have brought some more.
WELL, IT WAS THE LAST ONE.
I'VE JUST REPLACED THE PINE RESIN.
The ones we made ourselves I brought some spare ones.
trickle
trickle
HUH,
WHAT'S THIS?
NOT TO WORRY.
I BROUGHT THIS FOR CASES LIKE THIS.
MAYBE IT WAS BAD...
It's a natural product after all
WE NEED TO FIND SOME REPLACE-MENT.

I'm not sure though.
STUFF LIKE THIS OXIDISES OR EVAPO-RATES...
WHAT?!
...IT WON'T BURN.
IT'LL STILL BURN, WON'T IT?
MAYBE IT'S USELESS BECAUSE IT'S TOO OLD.
I have dried grass for kindling on me.
AT A PLACE WHERE IT'S ALWAYS DARK.
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT WE'D BE STAYING HERE THIS LONG.
WE'D GET INTO TROUBLE BECAUSE OF THE SMOKE.
Thinking about it
BUT...
IF WE MADE FIRE IN AN AIR-TIGHT ROOM LIKE THIS,
HUH?
I had to give it some thought.
THERE SHOULD BE SOME WOOD OR PAPER AROUND.
OKAY, LET'S SEARCH FOR SOMETHING THAT BURNS.
WE CAN BREAK CHAIRS OR DOORS TO PIECES.
Paper or cloth would only burn for a moment, though

BUT WHERE ..?
poof
MAYBE THERE ARE CANDLES...
WHAT DO WE DO THEN?
OR SOMETHING AROUND.
POISONOUS GAS MIGHT EXUDE...
AND IF WE BURNED SOME WEIRD STUFF,
We almost died because of something like that before.
WELL,
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
Carbon monoxide poisoning, was it?
Or was it carbon dioxide?
NO WAY!
IT WENT OUT ALREADY?!
GIVE ME A BREAK!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER

IT'S PITCH-DARK!
I'M HERE.
WHERE?
STOP RUNNING AROUND.
NATSU!
HEY, NATSU, WHERE ARE YOU?
I CAN'T SEE ANY-THING.
BURN AGAIN.
JUST ONCE.
IT WON'T BURN!
WHAT?
WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU NATSU?
I'M HERE!
THE ONE WHO'S MOVING AROUND IS YOU, SEMIMARU-SAN.
IF YOU FELL INTO THE WATER, YOU'D BE IN TROUBLE.
STOP MOVING, AND STAY PUT!

I'VE BEEN HERE ALL THE TIME
P... PLEASE CALM DOWN.
THERE YOU ARE!
I can't see anything!
IT'S YOU, RIGHT, NATSU?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
THERE'S ...
A WALL HERE.
THIS IS DANGEROUS SO LET'S SIT DOWN
HEY,
HOW COME YOU'RE SO CALM?
I HATE THE DARK!
S...
SEMIMARU-SAN, GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING I HATE, IT'S THE DARKNESS!

I'M NOT THAT AFRAID ANYMORE...
SINCE YOU'RE WITH ME...
I'M NOT CALM.
BUT YOU FREAKED OUT FIRST...
WHAT?!
BUT...
SEMIMARU-SAN...
USED TO BE TERRIFYING HIMSELF, THOUGH...
SOL
BUT...
I HAVE THE FEELING THAT SOME-HOW IT WILL COME OUT ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T KNOW WHY THAT IS,

EVEN IF YOU'D DIE TOGETHER WITH ME?
WOULD YOU BE OKAY...
WITH ME BY YOUR SIDE IF WE DIED?

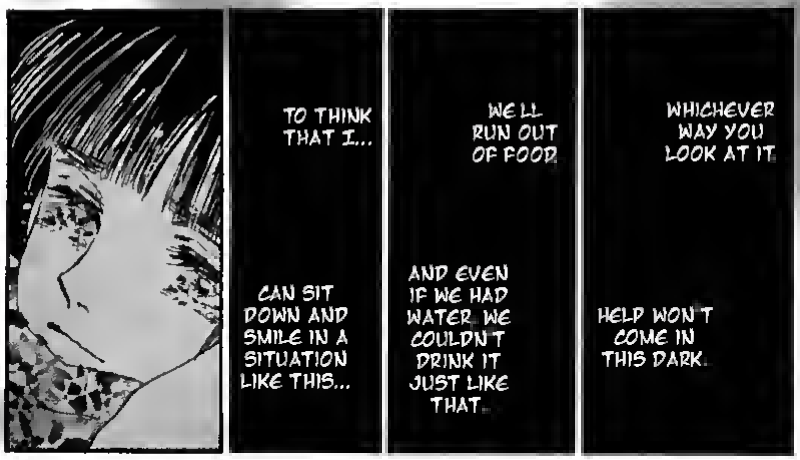
YOU...
ANSWERED MY QUESTION WITH A QUESTION, DIDN'T YOU?
I'M SORRY.
UM,
OR IS HE CLINGING TO ME?
WOULD YOU BE ALL RIGHT...
WITH ME BY YOUR SIDE, SEMIMARU-SAN?
IS HE HOLDING ME?
WELL,
I CAME TO THINK THAT I WOULDN'T MIND IF IT WAS WITH YOU.
JUST RECENTLY,
IF IT WAS WITH YOU...
YEAH...

HE'S HOLDING ME...

I GUESS HE'S GROWN FOND OF ME...
SINCE WHEN...?

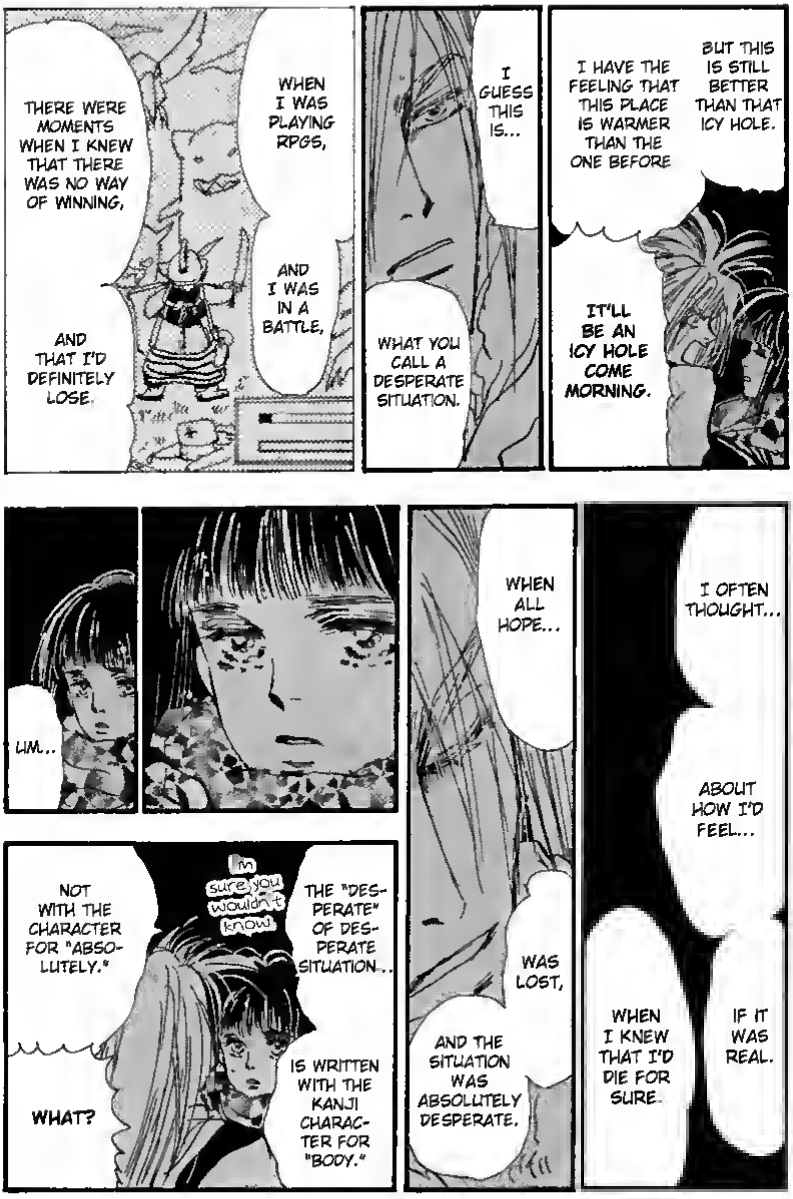
WHERE SHOULD I PUT MY HANDS?
THOUGH, THERE'S NOTHING GOOD ABOUT THIS.
I'M GLAD THAT HE CAN'T SEE ME.
MY FACE IS HOT.

THAT YOU CAN'T SEE MY FACE MAKES SAYING IT EASIER.
NO.
WHAT AM I SAYING AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
JUST A LITTLE!
BECAUSE I...
LIKE YOU A LITTLE.
A LITTLE?
IT MAKES TALKING EASIER IF YOU CAN'T SEE ANY-THING
BUT...
A LITTLE TOO.
UM,
I LIKE YOU...
CAN I SMILE NOW?
WHY...

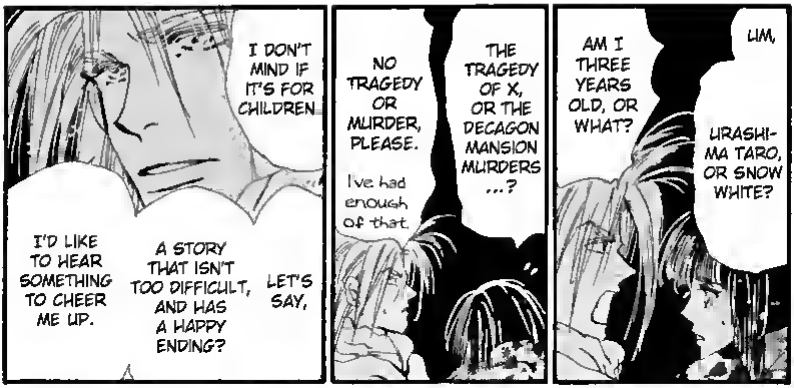

TO THINK THAT I...
CAN SIT DOWN AND SMILE IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS...
WE'LL RUN OUT OF FOOD.
AND EVEN IF WE HAD WATER, WE COULDN'T DRINK IT JUST LIKE THAT.
WHICHEVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT.
HELP WON'T COME IN THIS DARK.

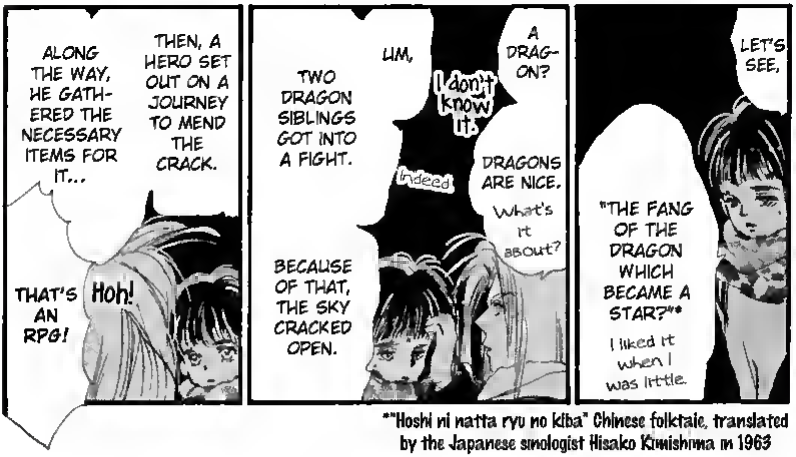
DON'T THINK...
THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS BE IN LUCK!
Sorry, master
AND STILL, I ACTED RASHLY...
AND BADLY PREPARED...
WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT THE CONSE-QUENCES...

AND AFTER RYO-CHIN...
NOT TO GET CARRIED AWAY
ADMON-ISHED ME...


THERE WERE MOMENTS WHEN I KNEW THAT THERE WAS NO WAY OF WINNING,
AND THAT I'D DEFINITELY LOSE.
WHEN I WAS PLAYING RPGS,
AND I WAS IN A BATTLE,
I GUESS THIS IS...
WHAT YOU CALL A DESPERATE SITUATION.
I HAVE THE FEELING THAT THIS PLACE IS WARMER THAN THE ONE BEFORE
BUT THIS IS STILL BETTER THAN THAT ICY HOLE.
IT'LL BE AN ICY HOLE COME MORNING.
UM...
WHEN ALL HOPE...
WAS LOST,
AND THE SITUATION WAS ABSOLUTELY DESPERATE.
I OFTEN THOUGHT...
ABOUT HOW I'D FEEL...
WHEN I KNEW THAT I'D DIE FOR SURE.
IF IT WAS REAL.
I'm sure you wouldn't know!
NOT WITH THE CHARACTER FOR "ABSOLUTELY."
WHAT?
THE "DESPERATE" OF DESPERATE SITUATION...
IS WRITTEN WITH THE KANJI CHARACTER FOR "BODY."

U...
UM,
I WAS RELATIVELY GOOD AT JAPANESE.
NATSU,
SURPRISINGLY WELL-VERSED IN KANJI CHARACTERS, AREN'T YOU?
YOU'RE ...
WHY?
What a bother.
I DON'T KNOW WHY.
But the meaning is different.
BUT "ABSOLUTELY DESPERATE" SOUNDS PERFECTLY FINE.
Heh!
I've never read any books
Ever since I was little. Lately, I read mystery
BECAUSE I'VE LIKED TO READ BOOKS.
COME ON,
TELL ME A STORY.
HUH?
A STORY YOU KNOW.
I DON'T MIND IF YOU JUST GO AHEAD WITH SOMETHING YOU REMEMBER.
S...
SOMETHING?
ANYTHING IS FINE WITH ME.


I DON'T MIND IF IT'S FOR CHILDREN.
I'D LIKE TO HEAR SOMETHING TO CHEER ME UP.
A STORY THAT ISN'T TOO DIFFICULT, AND HAS A HAPPY ENDING?
LET'S SAY,
NO TRAGEDY OR MURDER, PLEASE.
I've had enough of that.
THE TRAGEDY OF X, OR THE DECAGON MANSION MURDERS ...?
AM I THREE YEARS OLD, OR WHAT?
UM,
URASHIMA TARO, OR SNOW WHITE?


ALONG THE WAY, HE GATHERED THE NECESSARY ITEMS FOR IT...
THEN, A HERO SET OUT ON A JOURNEY TO MEND THE CRACK.
THAT'S AN RPG!
Hoh!
UM,
TWO DRAGON SIBLINGS GOT INTO A FIGHT.
BECAUSE OF THAT, THE SKY CRACKED OPEN.
A DRAGON?
I don't know it.
Indeed
DRAGONS ARE NICE.
What's it about?
LET'S SEE,
"THE FANG OF THE DRAGON WHICH BECAME A STAR?"*
I liked it when I was little.

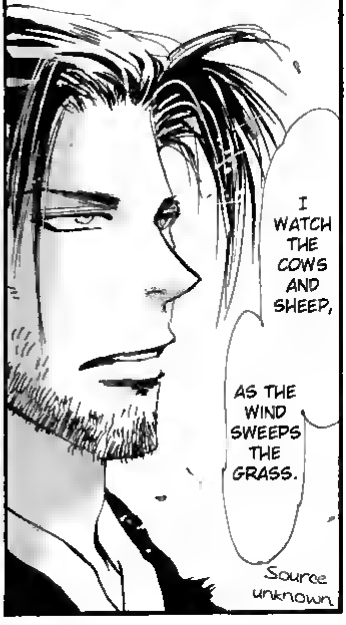
*"Hoshi ni natta ryu no kiba" Chinese folktale, translated by the Japanese sinologist Hisako Kimishima in 1963

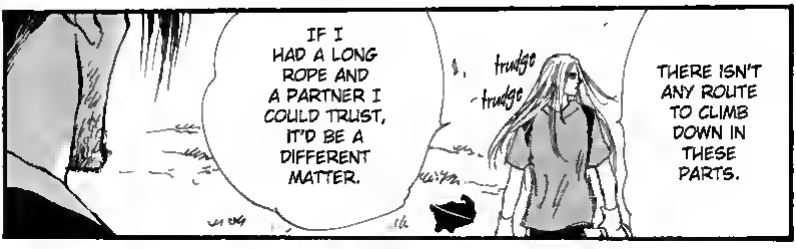
The very memory of her makes me sick. Or was it loathsome?
AH!
THAT PRECOCIOUS BRAT.
SHE CALLED HERSELF A PRINCESS OR SOMETHING.
Ah
FROM HIBARI-CHAN.
I'VE HEARD THAT TERM SOMEWHERE SINCE WE CAME HERE.
HMM?
DRAG-ON?
AND THAT THERE WAS A ROCK THAT SEALED AWAY A DRAGON.
SHE TOLD US THAT FANTASTIC STORY ABOUT HER BEING A FORTUNE-TELLING PRIESTESS,
MAYBE SHE'S SENSING...
THAT HOTARU-CHAN IS IN DANGER AGAIN.
I WONDER WHAT BECAME OF HER...
DO YOU THINK SHE FOUND HER TEAM MEMBERS?

IT'S LIKE MY FEELINGS...
ARE DEAD SOMEHOW.
LET'S SEE...
There was the dragon from the northern sea and the dragon from the southern mountains... wasn't it?
He can't see my face, so I don't feel embarrassed.
OKAY,
THEN READ THAT STORY TO ME.
I MEAN TELL IT TO ME.
IT SOUNDS INTERESTING.
SURE.
HAS LEFT ME EXHAUSTED.
ALL THAT WANDERING AROUND UNDERGROUND
BEING SWEPT AWAY
AND NOW BEING IN TOTAL DARKNESS.
HAVING SEEN HOTARU-CHAN BEING DRAGGED OFF
ONCE...
UPON A TIME,
IN A FARAWAY COUNTRY,

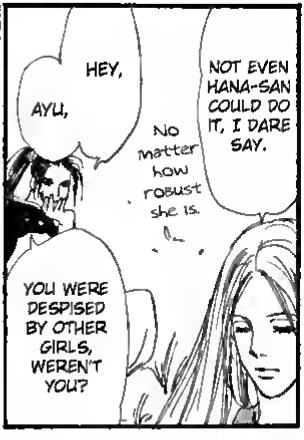
THE SKY IS BLUE,
THE FIELDS ARE WIDE.
WE BOTH FELL ASLEEP.
THERE LIVED AN ELDERLY COUPLE.
AND TWO DRAG-ONS.
I'LL START FROM WHERE THE HERO IS BORN.
BEFORE I COULD FINISH THE STORY,

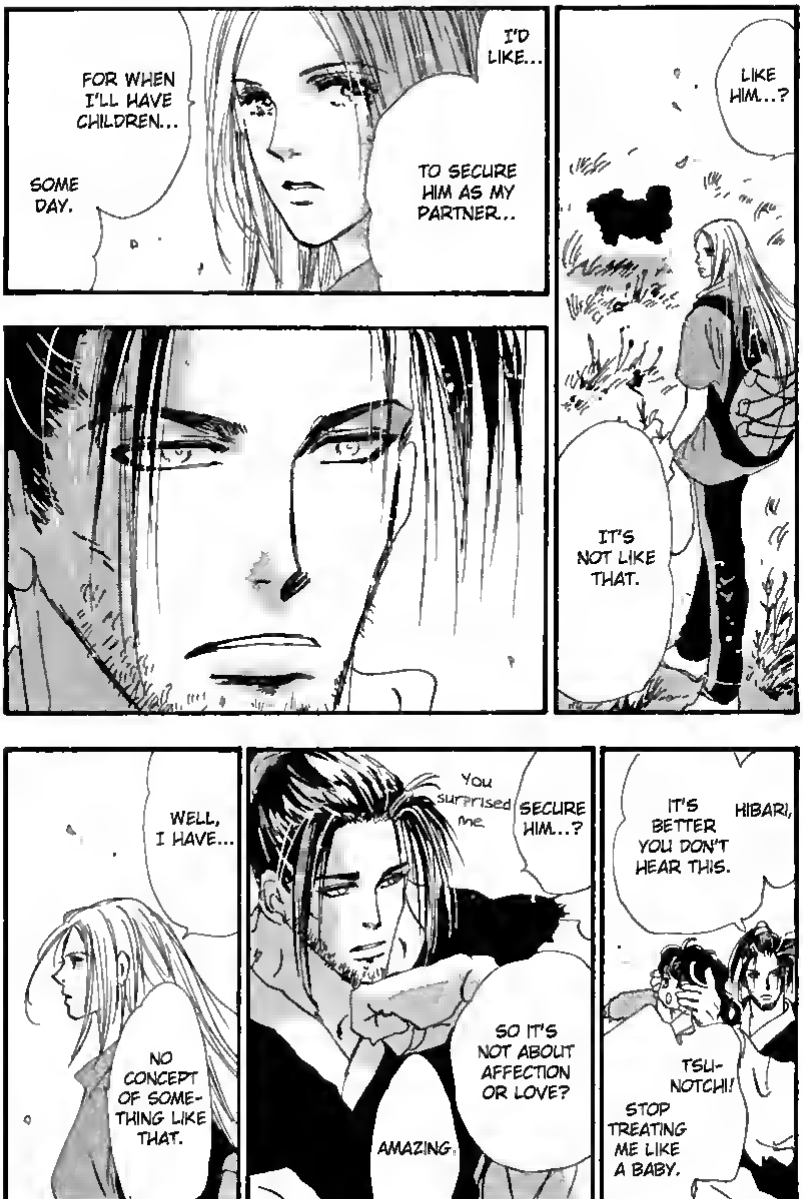
THERE USED TO BE A HIGHER HILL OVER THERE.
THIS PLACE HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY HILLY!
HIBA-RI, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

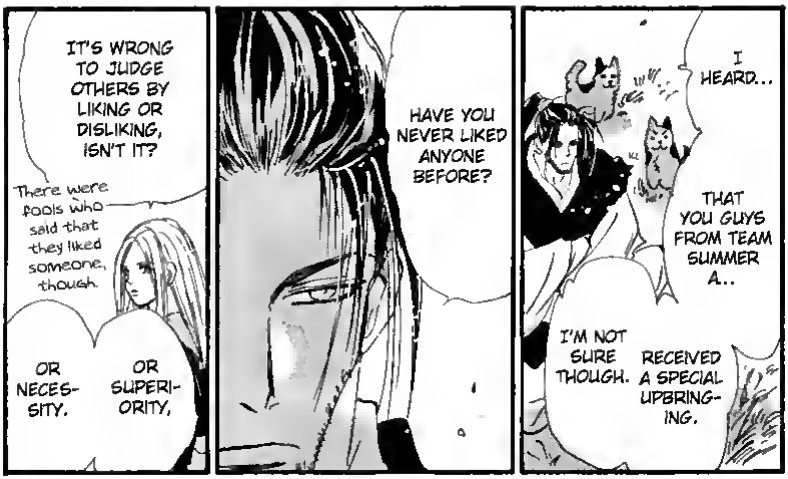

I WATCH THE COWS AND SHEEP,
AS THE WIND SWEEPS THE GRASS.
Source unknown


IF I HAD A LONG ROPE AND A PARTNER I COULD TRUST, IT'D BE A DIFFERENT MATTER.
trudge trudge
THERE ISN'T ANY ROUTE TO CLIMB DOWN IN THESE PARTS.

I KNOW THAT YOU LIKE ARAMAKI-SAN,
BUT WATCH A LITTLE MORE WHAT YOU SAY AND DO.

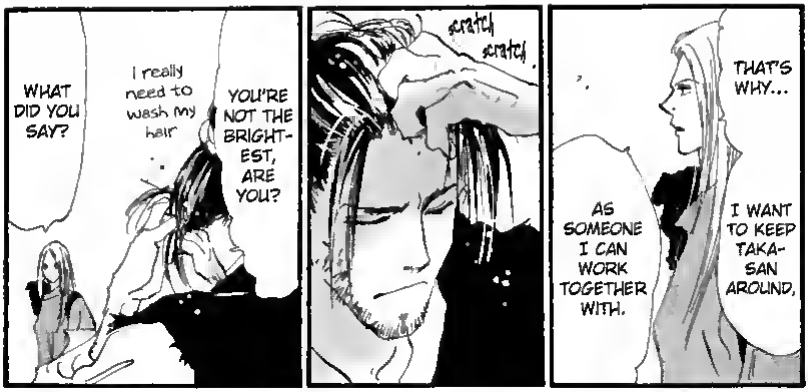

HEY, AYU,
YOU WERE DESPISED BY OTHER GIRLS, WEREN'T YOU?
No matter how robust she is,
NOT EVEN HANA-SAN COULD DO IT, I DARE SAY.


I'D LIKE...
TO SECURE HIM AS MY PARTNER..
FOR WHEN I'LL HAVE CHILDREN...
SOME DAY.
LIKE HIM...?
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
SECURE HIM...?
You surprised me.
AMAZING.
SO IT'S NOT ABOUT AFFECTION OR LOVE?
WELL, I HAVE...
NO CONCEPT OF SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
HIBARI,
IT'S BETTER YOU DON'T HEAR THIS.
TSU-NOTCHI!
STOP TREATING ME LIKE A BABY.


IT'S WRONG TO JUDGE OTHERS BY LIKING OR DISLIKING, ISN'T IT?
There were fools who said that they liked someone, though.
OR NECESSITY.
OR SUPERIORITY,
HAVE YOU NEVER LIKED ANYONE BEFORE?
I HEARD...
THAT YOU GUYS FROM TEAM SUMMER A...
RECEIVED A SPECIAL UPBRINGING.
I'M NOT SURE THOUGH.

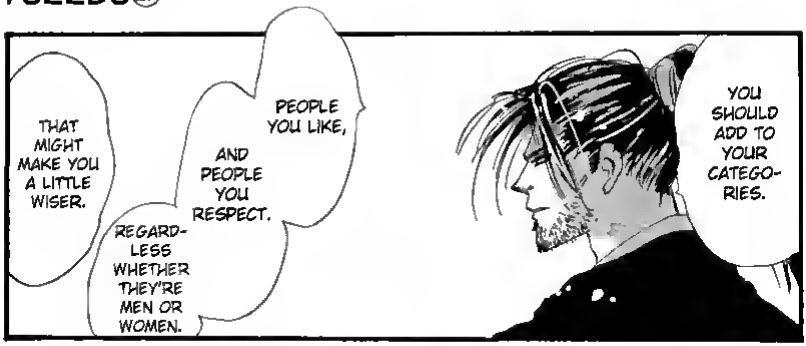
CATEGORIES?
I NEVER DIVIDED PEOPLE INTO CATEGORIES LIKE THAT FROM THE START.

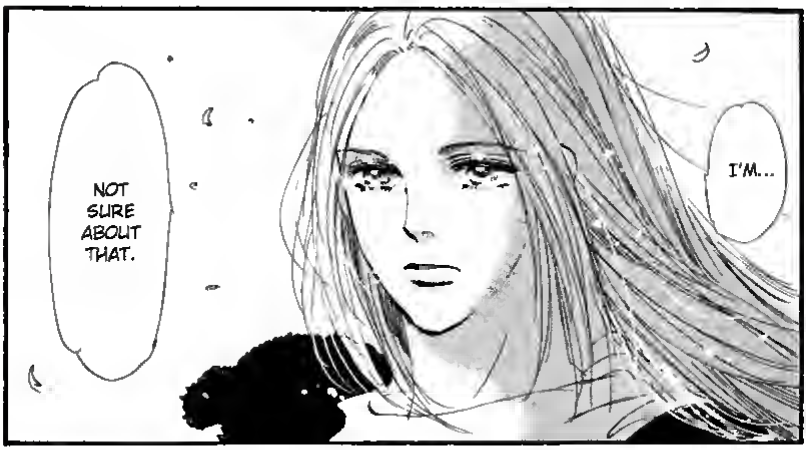
I DIVIDE THEM...
INTO ALLIES OR ENEMIES,
PEOPLE I CAN WORK TOGETHER WITH,
PEOPLE WHO'RE USEFUL,
PEOPLE WHO'RE A BURDEN,
OR PEOPLE...
WHO'RE NOT WORTH TALKING TO.

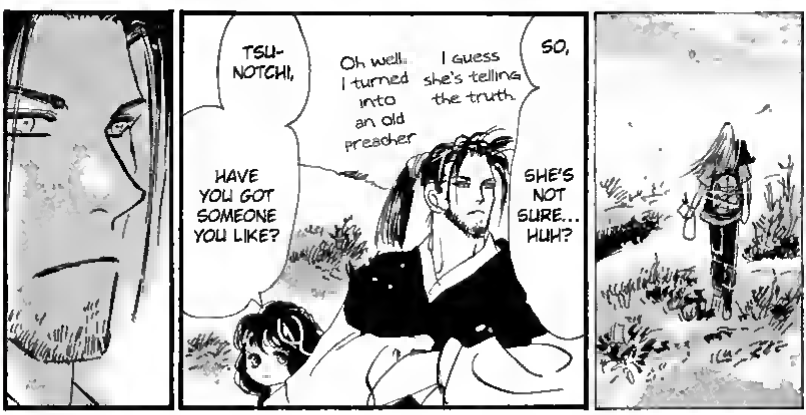

WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I really need to wash my hair
YOU'RE NOT THE BRIGHTEST, ARE YOU?
scratch scratch
THAT'S WHY...
AS SOMEONE I CAN WORK TOGETHER WITH.
I WANT TO KEEP TAKA-SAN AROUND,

ARGUING...
I HATE...
ABOUT FUTILE THINGS.
I DON'T CARE HOW YOU WERE BROUGHT UP,
BUT DON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE.

SO HURRY UP AND REALIZE IT,
AND GET YOUR FEELINGS UNDER CONTROL.
I CAN SEE PLAINLY...
THAT YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON ARAMAKI-SAN.

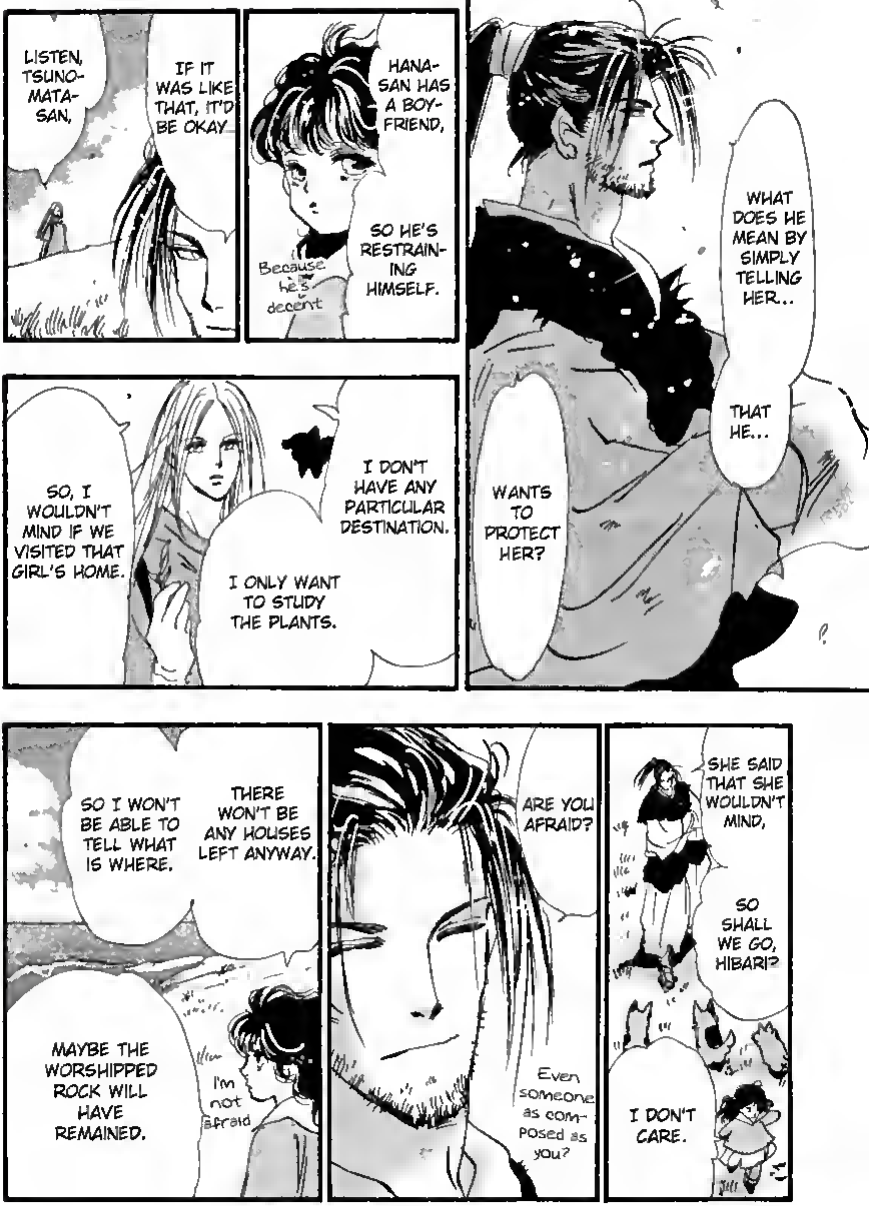

YOU SHOULD ADD TO YOUR CATEGO-RIES.
PEOPLE YOU LIKE,
AND PEOPLE YOU RESPECT.
REGARD-LESS WHETHER THEY'RE MEN OR WOMEN.
THAT MIGHT MAKE YOU A LITTLE WISER.


I'M...
NOT SURE ABOUT THAT.


SO,
I guess she's telling the truth.
Oh well, I turned into an old preacher
TSU-NOTCHI,
HAVE YOU GOT SOMEONE YOU LIKE?
SHE'S NOT SURE... HUH?

WE ALL DID, DIDN'T WE?
WE LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND.
DID YOU...
LEAVE SOMEONE BEHIND YOU LOVED?
I WANT TO PROTECT YOU.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
ARAMAKI-SAN, EITHER.
What was she like? Tell me!
STOP DODGING MY QUESTION!
Have you got a task for us?
We want to do some-thing!!
BUT...
SPEAKING OF...
NOT BEING SURE.

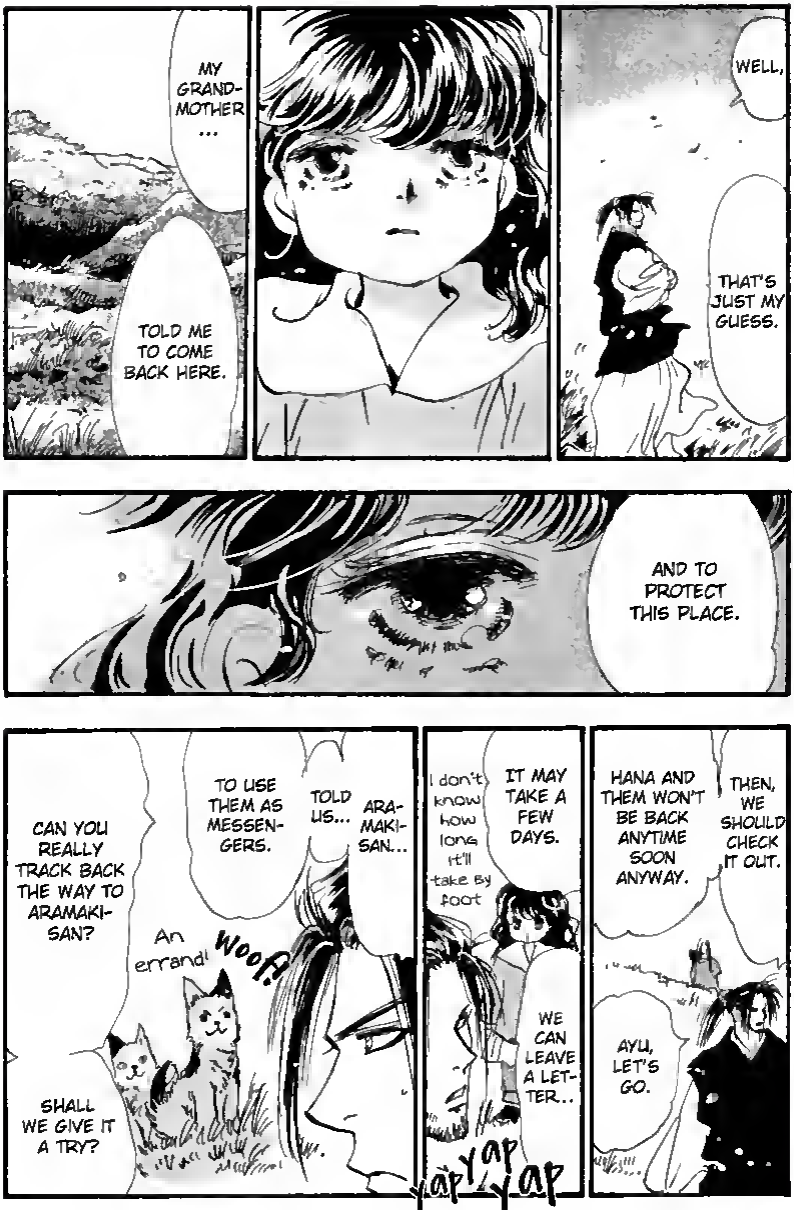
WHAT?
EVERYONE SAYS IT ALL THE TIME.
Just like that.
THAT THEY WANT TO PROTECT A BELOVED CHILD,
OR SOMEONE THEY LOVE.
Even if they're lying.
WHAT...
DOES ...
HE MEAN BY THAT?
I'D UNDERSTAND THAT PART.
Give us something to do
A JOB!
IF HE SAID THAT HE LOVED HER,
OR..
THAT HE WANTED TO GO OUT WITH HER,
OR..
THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE HER HIS,
OR SOME SUCH...
I'D KNOW WHAT WOULD COME NEXT.
BUT ARAMAKI-SAN...
IS DIFFERENT.


LISTEN, TSUNOMATA-SAN,
IF IT WAS LIKE THAT, IT'D BE OKAY...
HANA-SAN HAS A BOY-FRIEND,
Because he's decent
SO HE'S RESTRAINING HIMSELF.
WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY SIMPLY TELLING HER..
THAT HE...
WANTS TO PROTECT HER?
SO, I WOULDN'T MIND IF WE VISITED THAT GIRL'S HOME.
I DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR DESTINATION.
I ONLY WANT TO STUDY THE PLANTS.
SO I WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL WHAT IS WHERE.
THERE WON'T BE ANY HOUSES LEFT ANYWAY.
MAYBE THE WORSHIPPED ROCK WILL HAVE REMAINED.
I'm not afraid
ARE YOU AFRAID?
Even someone as composed as you?
SHE SAID THAT SHE WOULDN'T MIND,
SO SHALL WE GO, HIBARI?
I DON'T CARE.

THEY SAY...
THAT A VICIOUS DRAGON WAS SEALED AWAY THERE A LONG TIME AGO.
IT'S BEEN WORSHIPPED AS A SACRED OBJECT FOR GENERATIONS.
A ROCK?
A HUGE, ROUND BOULDER WITH A SACRED STRAW FESTOON WRAPPED AROUND IT.
A DRAGON ...
YOU SAY?
NO,
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN SITTING THERE.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT BEFORE I WAS BORN, THOUGH.
HAS THAT BOULDER EVER BEEN MOVED ASIDE?
GO AHEAD AND LAUGH.
MAYBE IT ROLLED AWAY AND SLINK IN THE OCEAN.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT EITHER.

WELL,
STORIES LIKE THAT...
OFTEN CONTAIN A GRAIN OF TRUTH.
WHAT?
A DRAGON?
SO IT MIGHT BE TRUE... ABOUT THE DRAGON.
YOUR FAMILY ...
WAS INFLUENTIAL ON THIS ISLAND, I ASSUME.
WHAT DO YOU...
MEAN?
IN ORDER TO PRAY FOR RAIN THEY'D OFFER THEIR DAUGHTERS...
AS SACRIFICES.
OR A LONG DROUGHT,
OR WHEN THERE WERE MANY FLOODS,
THEY'D BLAME A DRAGON.
AND THEY'D PUT THE BLAME ON SOME GOBLIN.
TO REDUCE MOUTHS TO FEED CHILDREN WERE SOLD,
OR KILLED ...
AND BURIED.

HIBARI,
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING
STORIES LIKE THAT...
CONCEAL SOMETHING
AS A PRECAUTION,
THEY'D TELL INSUBORDINATES...
OR ANTAGONISTS...
THAT THERE WAS A DEVIL OR A GHOST...
BUT IN THAT CASE, THEY SET UP A PLACE...
WHICH NO ONE WAS ALLOWED TO APPROACH... TO HIDE SOMETHING FROM THE PEOPLE.
ORIGINALLY, SADO WAS AN ISLAND WITH GOLD MINES.
THE DRAGON COULD INDICATE WATER.
THEY PROBABLY HID SOMETHING BY PUTTING A BOULDER ON IT TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM GETTING CLOSE
WHICH PEOPLE WOULD OFTEN FALL INTO.
THE SEAL MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THERE'S A HOLE BELOW...

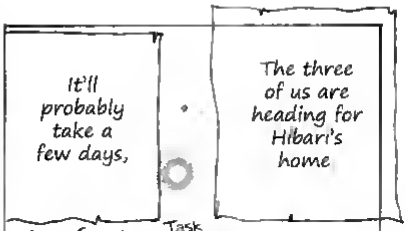

MY GRAND-MOTHER ...
TOLD ME TO COME BACK HERE.
WELL,
THAT'S JUST MY GUESS.
AND TO PROTECT THIS PLACE.
CAN YOU REALLY TRACK BACK THE WAY TO ARAMAKI-SAN?
TO USE THEM AS MESSEN-GERS.
TOLD US...
ARA-MAKI-SAN...
An errand!
Woof!
SHALL WE GIVE IT A TRY?
I don't know how long it'll take by foot
IT MAY TAKE A FEW DAYS.
WE CAN LEAVE A LET-TER...
yap yap yap
HANA AND THEM WON'T BE BACK ANYTIME SOON ANYWAY.
THEN, WE SHOULD CHECK IT OUT.
AYU, LET'S GO.

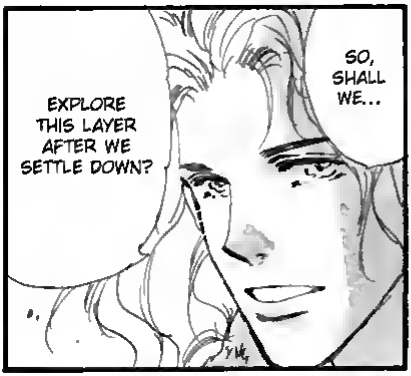
HIBARI,
IT'S PROBABLY SIGNIFICANT...
THAT YOU RETURNED TO THIS PLACE.
yap yap yap
THE SKY IS BLUE,
THE FIELDS ARE WIDE.
LOOK, OVER THERE.
THERE ARE SOME ANIMALS.
Wah!
THERE ARE TASTY-LOOKING FRUIT GROWING HERE.
I WONDER IF THEY'RE EDIBLE.
THE FOAL IS ALREADY EATING THEM.
crunch
crunch
crunch

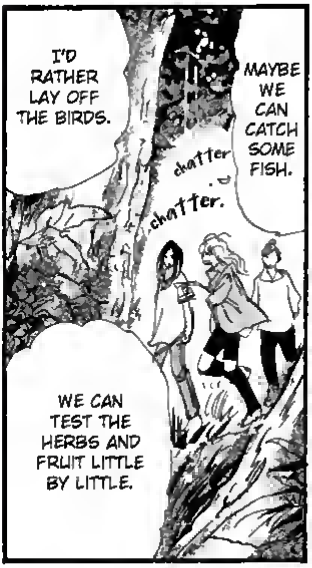
RIGHT.
WE'RE PROTECTED FROM THE HEAVY RAIN HERE TOO.
AND HAVE THEM COME.
WE SHOULD INFORM TSUNOMATA AND THE OTHERS ABOUT THIS,
I WANT TO LET AYU-SAN KNOW ABOUT THIS QUICKLY.
I THINK THAT SHE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO SEE IT.
ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO.
CAN YOU GO BACK THE WAY WE CAME?
Are they trained for something like this too?
'Course!
THEN PLEASE DELIVER A LETTER FOR ME.
MAYBE...
WE COULD ALL LIVE HERE...
TOGETHER...
peep peep
twitter
twitter
screech

TOGETHER WITH ARASHI...
AND THE OTHERS...
LIVE HERE...
WHAT MY DAD WANTED TO TELL ME?
IS THAT...
Yap Yap Yap
HUH, YOU TWO...
The ones we left behind
Found you!
A LETTER FROM TSUNO-MATA-SAN?
THE SUN IS SETTING ...
WITH THE ROOF, IT'LL BECOME DARK QUICKLY.
I've already rejoiced.
You're amazing Fujiko-chan.
TRUE...
NO, WE DON'T KNOW THAT YET, CHISA-CHAN AND HANA.
THERE MIGHT BE DANGEROUS CREATURES AROUND.

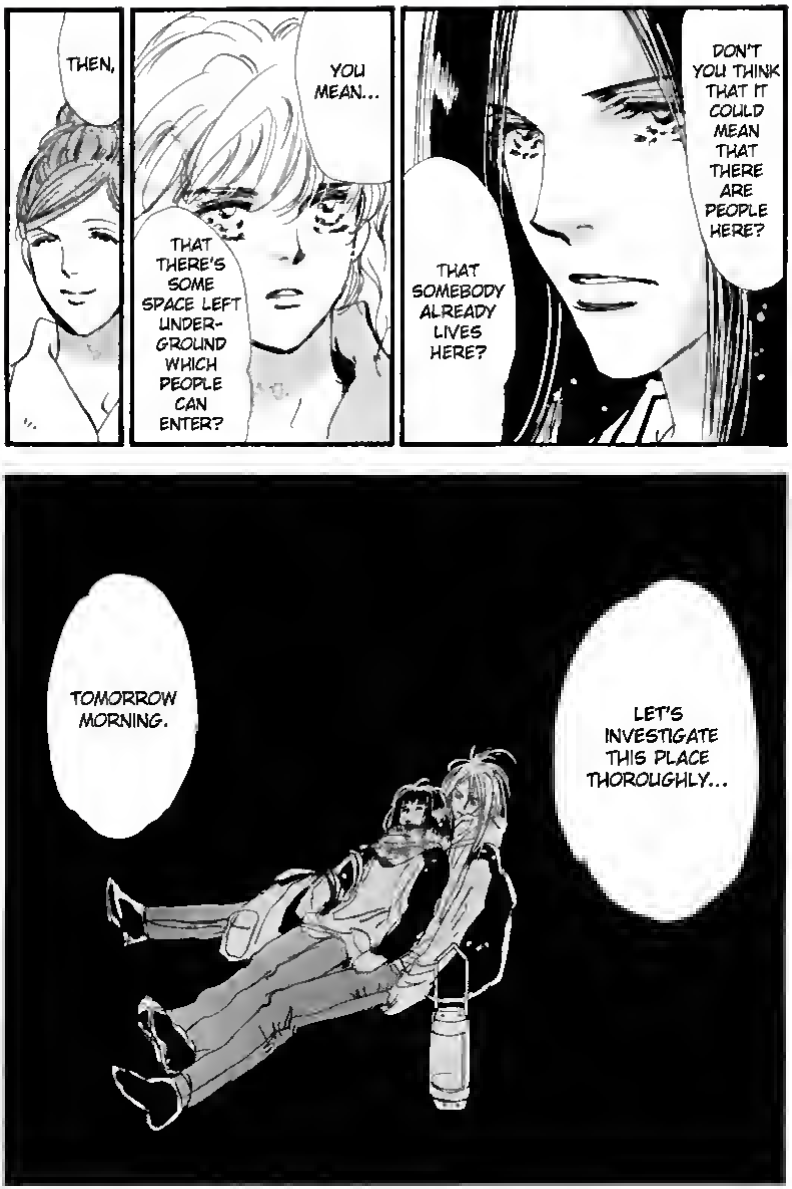
*Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form.







YES.
THE SOUND THAT YOU HEARD.
YOU SAID THAT IT HAD A RHYTHM,
RIGHT?
YES.
...THE SOUND?
After all?
BY THE WAY, HANA,
THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME.
DID YOU HEAR IT AFTER-WARDS?
I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND.
IT WASN'T AN SOS, WAS IT?
MAYBE I IMAGINED IT, AND IT WAS JUST SOME SOUND.
NO, IT WAS DIFFERENT.
A bird, or some-thing
I...
Haru would know
HAVE THE FEELING THAT IT CAME FROM BELOW, RATHER THAN FROM ABOVE...
NO.
trudge
trudge
IT SOUNDED MUFFLED AND IT HAD AN ECHO.
I'M NOT SURE WHERE I HEARD IT EITHER.


THEN,
YOU MEAN...
THAT THERE'S SOME SPACE LEFT UNDER-GROUND WHICH PEOPLE CAN ENTER?
THAT SOMEBODY ALREADY LIVES HERE?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT COULD MEAN THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE?
TOMORROW MORNING.
LET'S INVESTIGATE THIS PLACE THOROUGHLY...

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Mountains Chapter 4

【—Several Insights—】

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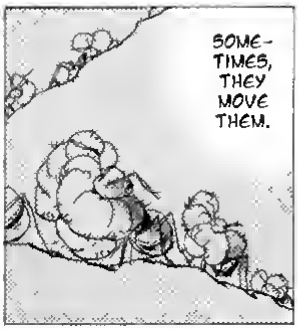
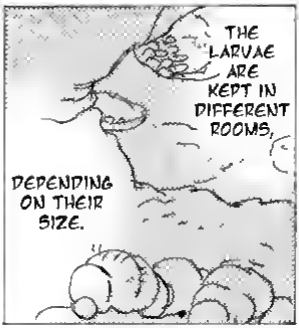
IS IT MORNING NOW, OR NIGHT?
HOW LONG DID I SLEEP?
Natsu
Uh-
I'D LIKE TO GO TO THE TOILET.
Semimaru
Shuu
BUT I'M AFRAID OF MOVING ON MY OWN...
SO, I'M AT A LOSS...
AS TO WHAT TO DO.
IN EITHER CASE,
LIGHT WON'T COME IN HERE ANYWAY...
I WONDER IF THEY'RE ALL SAFE.
ARASHI-KUN, MATSURI-CHAN, BOTAN-SAN...

tap
tap
HOTARU-CHAN.
HOTARU-CHAN,
I'M SORRY THAT WE CAN'T COME TO YOUR RESCUE.
bounce
gasp
SOME-HOW,
I HAVE THE FEELING THAT HIBARI-CHAN IS COMING NEARER.
She's alive.
I DOSED OFF..
Hotaru

Squirm
Squirm
YOU CAN'T COME HERE, HIBARI-CHAN.
YOU MUSTN'T...
I WONDER IF THE ANTS NEVER REST.
THEY'RE ALWAYS BUSY LOOKING AFTER THE LARVAE..
IT PROBABLY ISN'T SO EASY FOR THEM...
TO CATCH ANIMALS OR INSECTS THEY CAN TURN INTO FOOD...
SINCE A WHILE AGO, THE FOOD FOR THE LARVAE HAS CHANGED.
ARE THESE FUNGI?
Or mush-rooms?
roll
roll
HERE.

BUT I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT THEY'RE CUTE.
IT'S STRANGE,


SOME-TIMES, THEY MOVE THEM.


THE LARVAE ARE KEPT IN DIFFERENT ROOMS,
DEPENDING ON THEIR SIZE.

I GOT TO KNOW MY WAY AROUND INSIDE THIS NEST (?) A LITTLE.

MAYBE...
I CAN ESCAPE FROM HERE
BY DIS-TRACTING THEM, SOMEHOW.

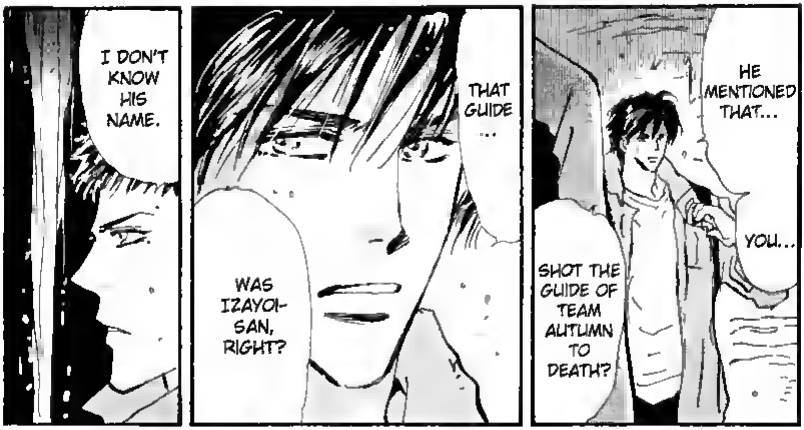
THEY EVEN HAVE A GARBAGE DUMP
THEY'RE ORDERLY.
(For empty egg shells, or left-over food

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE COLLECTING SOME HONEY-LIKE LIQUID THAT'S SECRETED FROM THEIR BODIES.
THE ANTS ARE RAISING OTHER INSECTS (?) TOO.
AND MUSH-ROOMS ARE RISKY.
THERE ISN'T ANY FOOD FOR ME. Here I'm hungry.
AND LIVE ON HERE AS SOME ANT'S QUEEN...?
SHOULD I LICK IT TOO?
BUT IF I KNOCK IT ON STONE...
tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok tok
IT WON'T BE CARRIED VERY FAR.
MINE IS "TOTORO."
It'd be better if it was a water pipe.
WE SHOULD CHOOSE OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL THEME SONGS.
I WANT "FF."
I DON'T WANT THAT!
I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING.

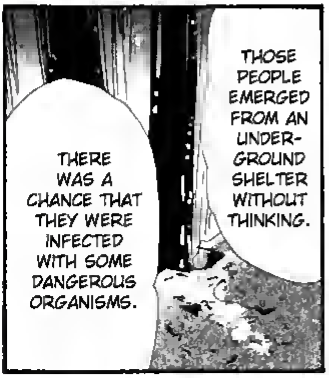
BE SAFE, EVERYONE!
WILL I BE ABLE TO MEET...
NAT-CHAN, SEMIMARU-SAN, AND ARASHI-KUN AGAIN?
WHILE I STILL HAVE LIGHT LEFT.
But they're always watching me.
I NEED ...
TO FLEE SOME-HOW.
ANGO-SAN,
KANA-ME-SAN!
THIS WAY!
ANGO-SAN,
Arashi
WE NEED TO FLEE!
Ango
KANA-ME-SAN.
KANAME-SAN!
WAIT! ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?

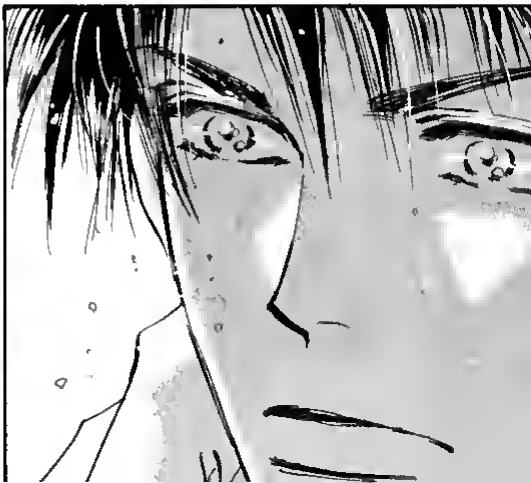
I WANT TO HEAR SOME DETAILS FROM YOU.
SO I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO.
NO WAY!
ARA-SHI, GO WITH-OUT ME.
I'LL GO AFTER KANAME-SAN!
MAYBE HE'S LURING THEM AWAY FROM US.
THAT'S WHY HE INTENTIONALLY WENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION...
LET'S GO.
PROBABLY BECAUSE HE ATTACKED THEM.
MOST OF THE ANTS ARE PURSUING KANAME... I MEAN, MOZU-SAN.

ANY-WAY,
WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.
HE...
IS ONE OF THE MEN WHO LEFT SHIGERU TO HIS FATE.
ARA-SHI,
HE WOULDN'T DO SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
huff
THERE ...
AREN'T ANY ANT HOLES IN THIS AREA.
Maybe we're safe here.
phew
SSHH
hah
ABOUT...
ANGO-SAN,
WHAT MOZU-SAN SAID EARLIER...


I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME.
THAT GUIDE ...
WAS IZAYOI-SAN, RIGHT?
HE MENTIONED THAT...
YOU...
SHOT THE GUIDE OF TEAM AUTUMN TO DEATH?

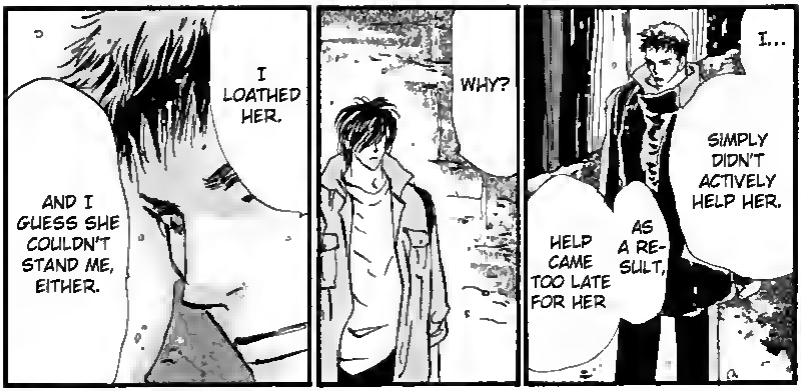
I HIT HIM BY ACCIDENT.
HE LEAPED IN FRONT OF MY GUN.

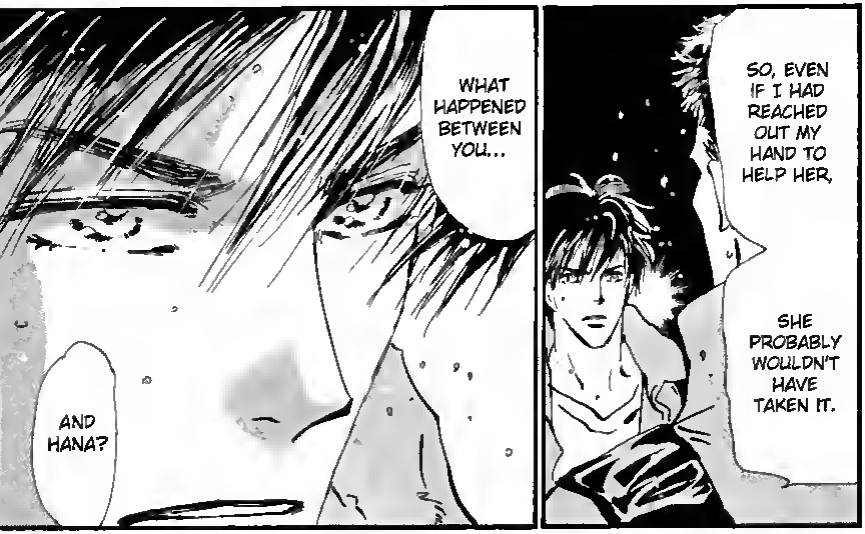

THERE WAS A CHANCE THAT THEY WERE INFECTED WITH SOME DANGEROUS ORGANISMS.
THOSE PEOPLE EMERGED FROM AN UNDER-GROUND SHELTER WITHOUT THINKING.



ARE YOU...
BLAMING ME?
THAT'S WHAT KANAME-SAN AND OUR OTHER TEACHERS...
TAUGHT US.
INDI-VIDUALS WHO RE-PRESENT DANGER TO OTHER PEOPLE...
ARE TO BE ELIMINATED WITHOUT MERCY.
I...
DIDN'T DO ANY-THING WRONG.

I DON'T SEE...
HOW YOU CAN THINK...
THAT YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, ANGO-SAN.
!
I DIDN'T KILL HER.
HE SAID...
THAT YOU AND RYO...
KILLED HER?
THEN, WHAT ABOUT HANA?
BUT I...


I LOATHED HER.
AND I GUESS SHE COULDN'T STAND ME, EITHER.
WHY?
I...
SIMPLY DIDN'T ACTIVELY HELP HER.
AS A RESULT,
HELP CAME TOO LATE FOR HER


WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU...
AND HANA?
SO, EVEN IF I HAD REACHED OUT MY HAND TO HELP HER,
SHE PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN IT.

DON'T TELL ARASHI.
PUN-ISH-MENT?
DON'T TELL HIM.
IT WAS PUN-ISH-MENT...
HIS DAUGH-TER
BUT STILL, HE INFIL-TRATED...
HAD KILLED MANY OF MY FRIENDS.
HER FATHER...
SHE WAS CHEEKY, AND SHE REBELLED AGAINST ME...
ABOUT EVERY-THING.
IT WAS SO HOT.
NOTH-ING...
HAP-PENED.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
IT WAS SO HOT.
AND TO MAKE HER PAY FOR HER FATHER'S DOING.
TO MAKE HER OBEY ME,
I ONLY WANTED TO TEACH HER A LITTLE LESSON...
DID YOU ATTACK HER?
DON'T TELL HIM!
IT WAS HOT,
AND WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY WATER.
THAT'S WHY I...

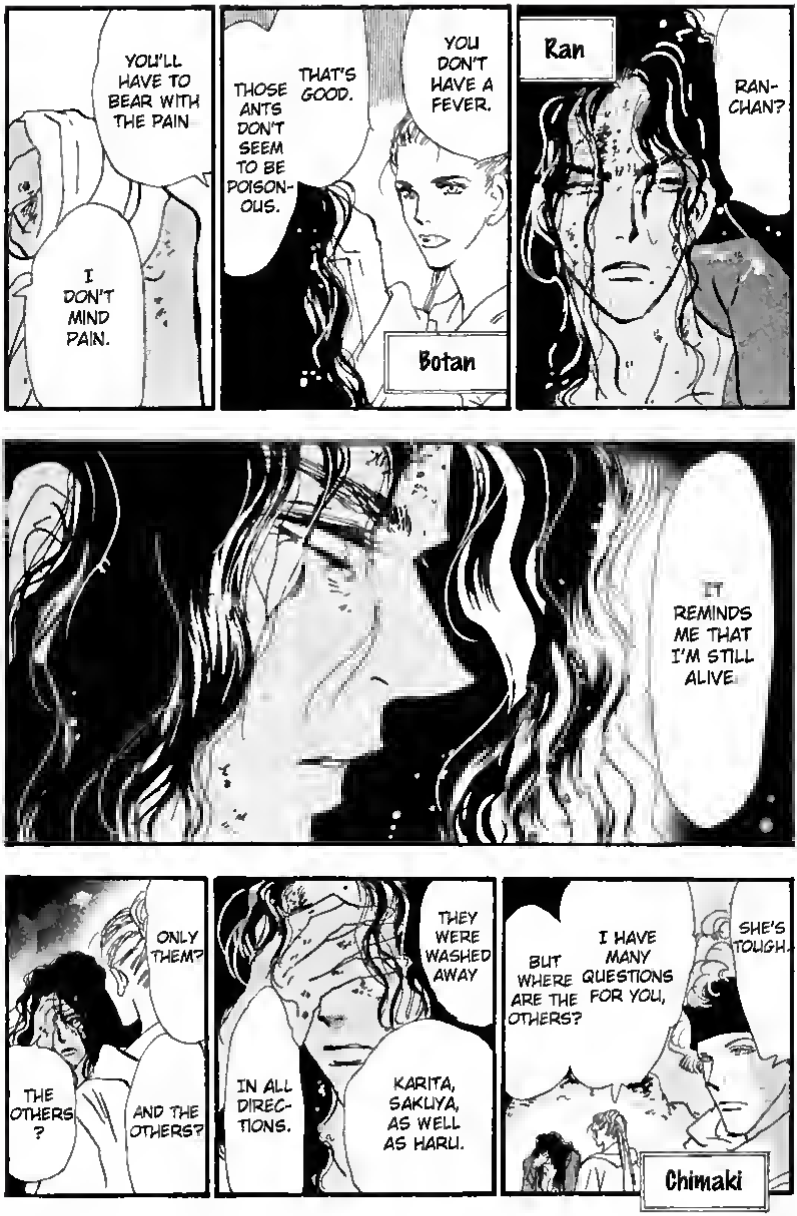
I'VE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT THAT.
BE-CAUSE SHE...
EASILY BECOMES THE TARGET FOR SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
I DIDN'T INTEND TO...
WHAT DID YOU INTEND TO DO THEN?!
WELL,
IT WAS ONLY AN AT-TEMPT
I DIDN'T DO IT.
I REGRET IT NOW.
IT WAS A MISTAKE.
I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN.

APOL-
OGIZE?
DO YOU FEEL OBLIGED TO APOLOGIZE TO HANA?
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
SSHH
IT WAS A MIS-TAKE?
YOU REGRET IT?
YOU WON'T DO IT AGAIN?
HANA HAS FEELINGS TOO.
WHO SUFFERS FROM SAD MEMORIES.
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE...
YOU HURT HER.

STOP
WAIT!
ARA-
SHI...
crunch

STOMP STOMP
ARASHI...!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
THEY'RE PERSIS-TENT.
A RIVER ...?
SSH
SHOULD I ELIMINATE HIM?
ANGO'S MENTAL STATE ISN'T GOOD AFTER ALL.
Kaname (Mozu)

MAKE THE ANTS GIVE UP.
splish
THIS SHOULD...
THE CURRENT IS FAST.
SPLASH
splish
splish
SSSHH
SSSHH
WERE YOU ABLE TO SLEEP A LITTLE, RAN-CHAN?
ARE YOU OKAY?


YOU'LL HAVE TO BEAR WITH THE PAIN
I DON'T MIND PAIN.
THOSE ANTS DON'T SEEM TO BE POISONOUS.
THAT'S GOOD.
YOU DON'T HAVE A FEVER.
Botan
Ran
RAN-CHAN?
IT REMINDS ME THAT I'M STILL ALIVE.
ONLY THEM?
THE OTHERS?
AND THE OTHERS?
THEY WERE WASHED AWAY
IN ALL DIREC-TIONS.
KARITA, SAKUYA, AS WELL AS HARU.
BUT WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
I HAVE MANY QUESTIONS FOR YOU,
SHE'S TOUGH.
Chimaki

ALL OF THEM...?
ACCORDING TO HER...
EVERY-ONE WENT MISSING...
IN A SINGLE NIGHT.
WHEN WE REACHED THIS ISLAND,
ONLY NIJIKO-SAN WAS LEFT.
Karita
huff
huff
Splish
Splish
SSH
DON'T CRY.
WHERE ARE YOU...?
SAKUYA.
HARU.
IT'S PITCH-DARK.
RAN-SAN!

TECHNIQUE ALONE ISN'T ENOUGH.
THAT'S WHAT YOU LACK.
WHAT YOU NEED THE MOST IS GUTS.
CAN YOU SCORE HIGHEST WITH IT?!
WILL CRYING MAKE YOU STRONGER?
WILL IT HELP YOU BECOME BETTER?
KINDNESS IS OUT OF PLACE HERE.
Splish
Splish
STOP CRYING!
I'VE OVER-COME THAT.
IT'S SOMETHING FROM MY CHILDHOOD

whooze
IT'S COLD...
huff
huff
Sakuya
HELLO, RAN-SAN,
KARITA-SAN,
HARU-SAN.
QUIT YOUR KIDDING, AND COME OUT.
MY BALD SPOT...
WILL GROW LARGER AGAIN.
ON MY OWN.
SOMEBODY, HELP ME.
HELP
I'M... USE-LESS...
sniff
sniff
sniff
whine
whine
whine
Dai
shake
splish
splish

Batsu
whine
Koruri
IT SEEMS THAT HIS SENSE OF SMELL DOESN'T WORK IN THIS PLACE.
HE'S SOAKED TOO...
Haru
BATSU,
CAN'T YOU CATCH DAI'S SCENT?
whine
THE LAMP DIMMED.
IT WON'T HOLD MUCH LONGER.
HARU,
CAN YOU SEE IN THE DARKNESS AS WELL?
I SEE WITH MY EARS.
KORURI,
WHEN IT TURNS DARK,
DON'T LET GO OF MY HAND.

rustle
rustle
rustle

Akane
THIS PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH ANTS TOO.

rustle rustle rustle
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ROUTE, I GUESS.

LET'S GO.

LISTEN,
WON'T THERE BE AN ANT'S QUEEN SOMEWHERE?
Momota

Ban
...

IT SEEMS THAT GENGORO PASSED THROUGH HERE.
BUT WE CAN'T FOLLOW HIM BECAUSE OF THEM.
What do we do?
Akira

I WONDER WHAT BECAME OF KURUMI...
BUT ... MAYBE...
RYUSEI-KUN IS WITH HER..
Finding it could be even more difficult.
WHERE IS THIS ANT'S QUEEN?
IF WE SMELLED LIKE THE ANT'S QUEEN,
I THINK THAT THE WORKER ANTS WOULDN'T ATTACK US ANYMORE.
ANT'S QUEEN ?
THAT GUY ISN'T RELIABLE!
RYUSEI-KUN?
Ryusei
KURUMI,
THANK YOU.
YES, COME SIT BY THE FIRE.
crackle
crackle

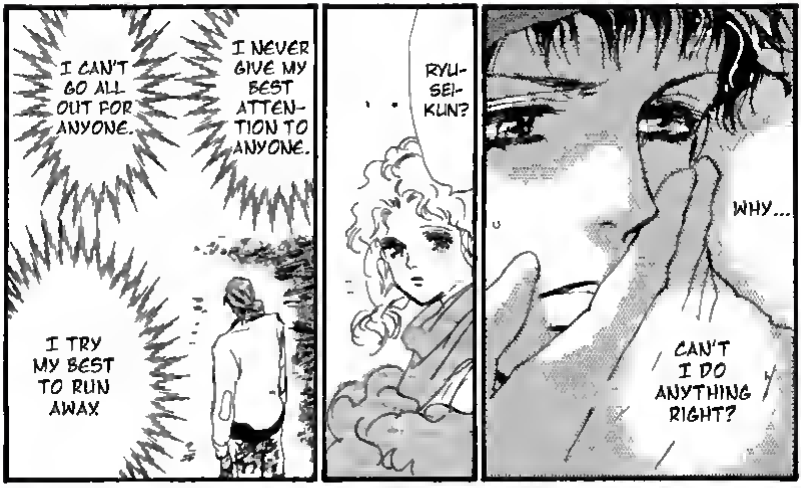
ARE YOU OKAY?
WANT ME TO MASSAGE YOUR FEET?
DO YOU FEEL UNWELL, SOMEHOW?
NO, I'M FINE.
JUST A LITTLE COLD.
Kurumi
phew
UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE'D BE ABLE TO MANAGE SOMEHOW.
BUT...
WITH THE BRANCHES AND STUFF THAT'S BEING WASHED DOWN, WE CAN KEEP THE FIRE GOING, AS WELL.
WE HAVE WATER.
LIGHT IS COMING IN TOO.
WE AREN'T SHORT OF THINGS TO EAT, EITHER.
SS#

RYUSEI-KUN,
DR. BAN-CHAN EXPLAINED MANY THINGS TO ME.
SO, IF THAT TIME COMES, I'LL BE FINE.
BUT WHAT IF HER LABOUR PAINS START?
WHAT DO I DO THEN?
EVEN THOUGH I'M WITH HER?
I'M HERE TOO, AREN'T I?
ALONE...?
DON'T MAKE A FACE LIKE THAT.
A FACE...
MANY WOMEN GIVE BIRTH ALONE.
DON'T WORRY.
IT'S A NATURAL PROCESS AFTER ALL.

IN MY CLASS,
I CAN'T REMEMBER HER NAME...
THERE WAS ONE OF THE MANY GIRLS I'VE GONE OUT WITH...
LIKE THAT...
...
SHE STUCK IN HER TAGS VERY NEATLY...
HEH!
chuckle
I'M KIND OF MESSY.
I GUESS I'M JUST LAZY.
IT'S REALLY NEAT.
YOU DO EVERYTHING WITH CARE.

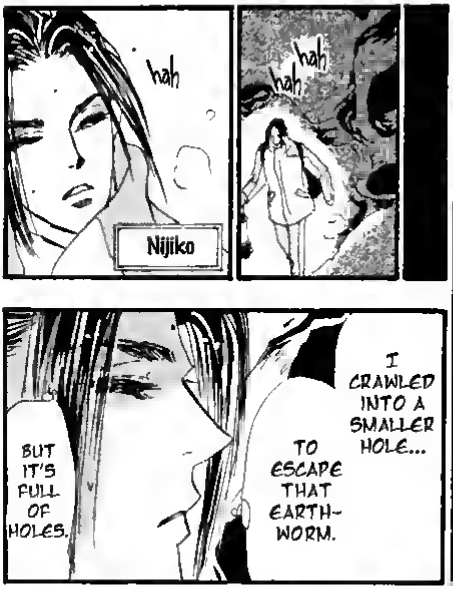
RYU-SEI-KUN,
YOU AREN'T LAZY.
HUH?
YOU THINK SO?
YOU JUST...
DON'T LIKE TO GET PROPERLY INVOLVED WITH ANYTHING.

I WAS SHOCKED THAT I MADE MY GIRLFRIEND...
THINK THAT.
I WAS BUSTED.
SHE SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME.
APART FROM THAT,
I TURNED STIFF FOR A MOMENT.
MY HANDS STARTED TREMBLING.
SHE MADE THE SAME FACE.
THAT I'M A GUY LIKE THAT.
I KNOW IT MYSELF
I KNOW THAT.


I CAN'T GO ALL OUT FOR ANYONE.
I NEVER GIVE MY BEST ATTENTION TO ANYONE.
I TRY MY BEST TO RUN AWAY
RYU-SEI-KUN?
WHY...
CAN'T I DO ANYTHING RIGHT?

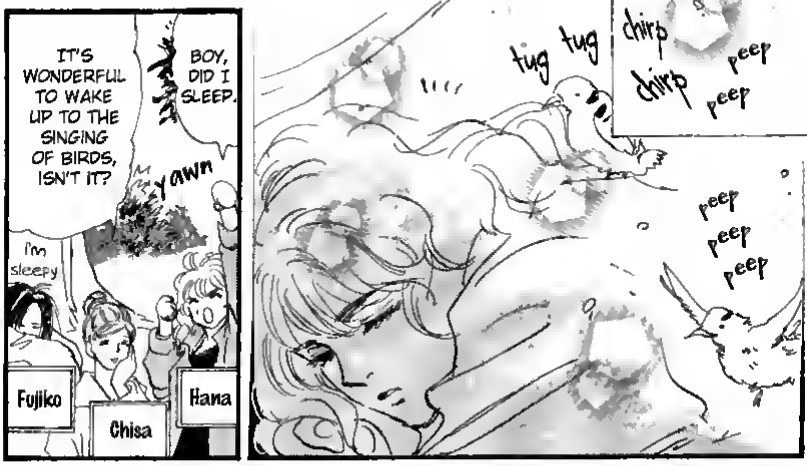
Stop clinging to my left arm.
RYUSEI-KUN?
WHY AM I...?
AND IF...
SOMEONE POINTS IT OUT TO ME, I'M HURT.

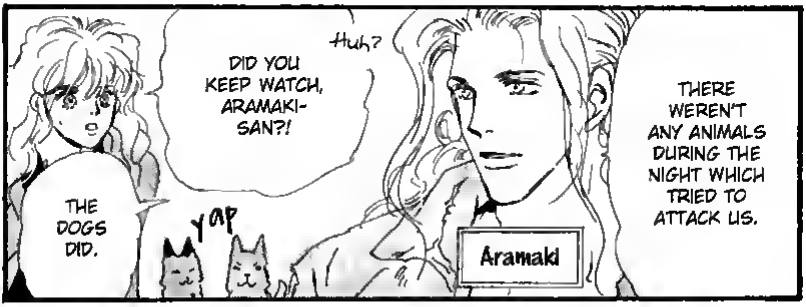
Ryo
What the heck?
APPARENTLY, WE WALKED INTO AN ANT NEST.
Matsuri
THERE ARE TERRIBLY HUGE ANTS HERE...
Aliens? Or ant creatures from outer space?
BUT THEY AREN'T COMING NEARER.
THEY ALMOST SEEM WARY.
I GUESS THEY DON'T LIKE THE SMELL.
IS THAT...
BECAUSE WE WERE STEEPED IN THE EXCREMENTS OF THAT EARTH-WORM?
SO,
SHALL WE TAKE A NAP HERE?
NAP?!
IN OTHER WORDS,
EARTH-WORMS ARE ENEMIES OF ANTS.
CLEVER GIRL.
THEY'RE SCARED!
Yay!

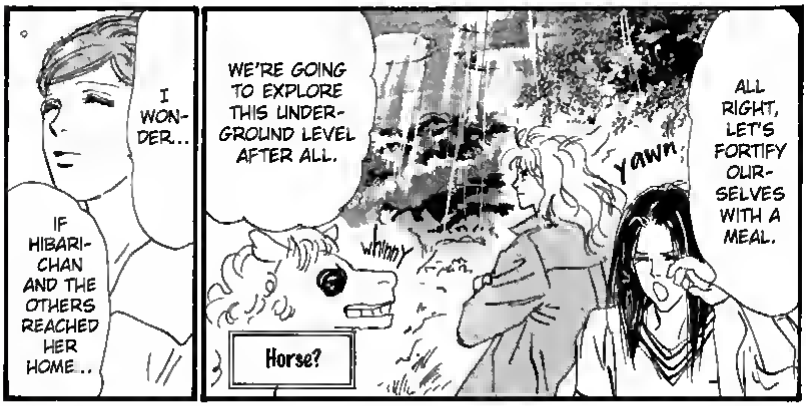

hah
Nijiko
hah
hah
I CRAWLED INTO A SMALLER HOLE...
TO ESCAPE THAT EARTH-WORM.
BUT IT'S FULL OF HOLES.

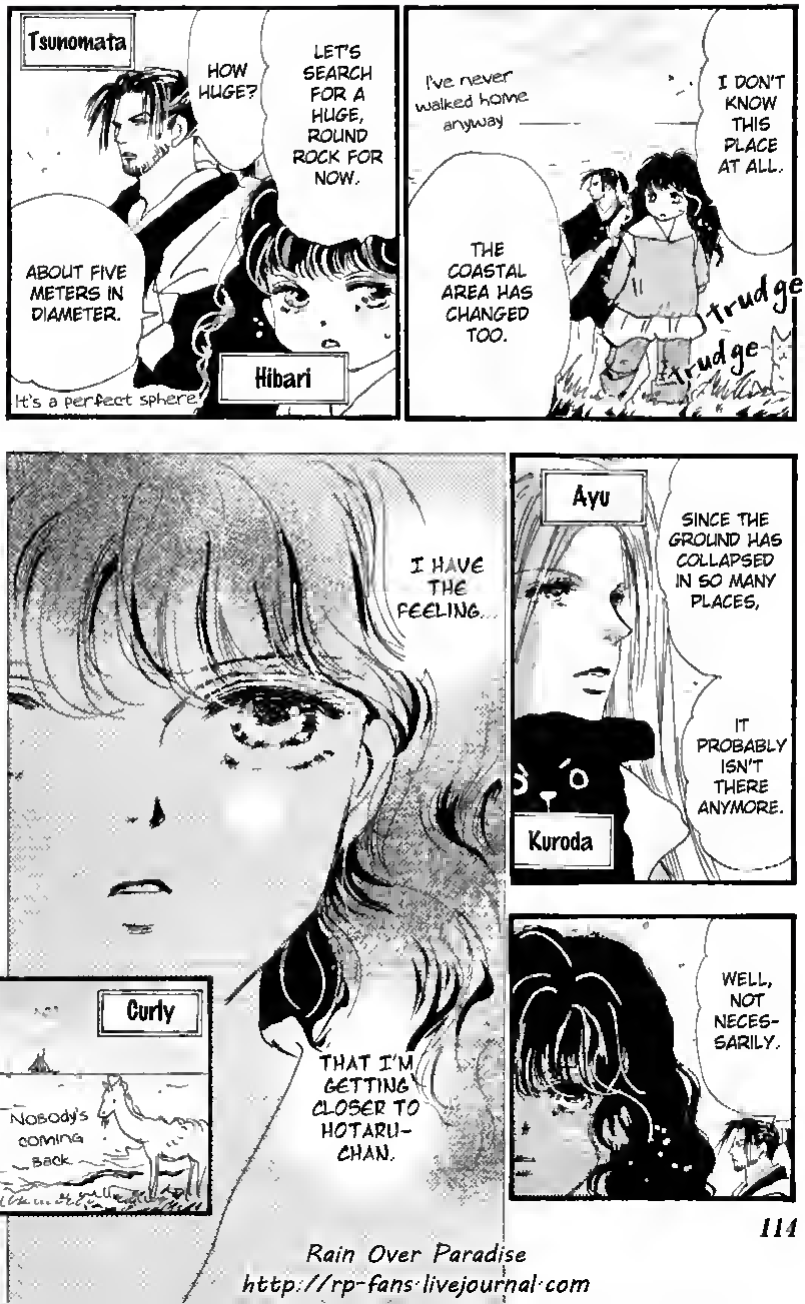
SOMEHOW,
He stinks though.
I'M TOTALLY HAPPY RIGHT NOW.

We...
lost all interest in living.
Gengoro
Kuri & Kura
I DON'T WANT TO WANDER AROUND UNNECES-SARILY
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND RAN-SAN AND THE OTHERS...?


IT'S WONDERFUL TO WAKE UP TO THE SINGING OF BIRDS, ISN'T IT?
BOY, DID I SLEEP.
yawn
I'm sleepy
Fujiko
Chisa
Hana
tug tug
chirp chirp
peep peep
peep peep peep


THE DOGS DID.
DID YOU KEEP WATCH, ARAMAKI-SAN?!
Huh?
yap
Aramaki
THERE WEREN'T ANY ANIMALS DURING THE NIGHT WHICH TRIED TO ATTACK US.


I WON-DER...
IF HIBARI-CHAN AND THE OTHERS REACHED HER HOME...
WE'RE GOING TO EXPLORE THIS UNDER-GROUND LEVEL AFTER ALL.
whinny
Horse?
yawn
ALL RIGHT, LET'S FORTIFY OUR-SELVES WITH A MEAL.



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Mountains Chapter 5

【—Individual Cases—】

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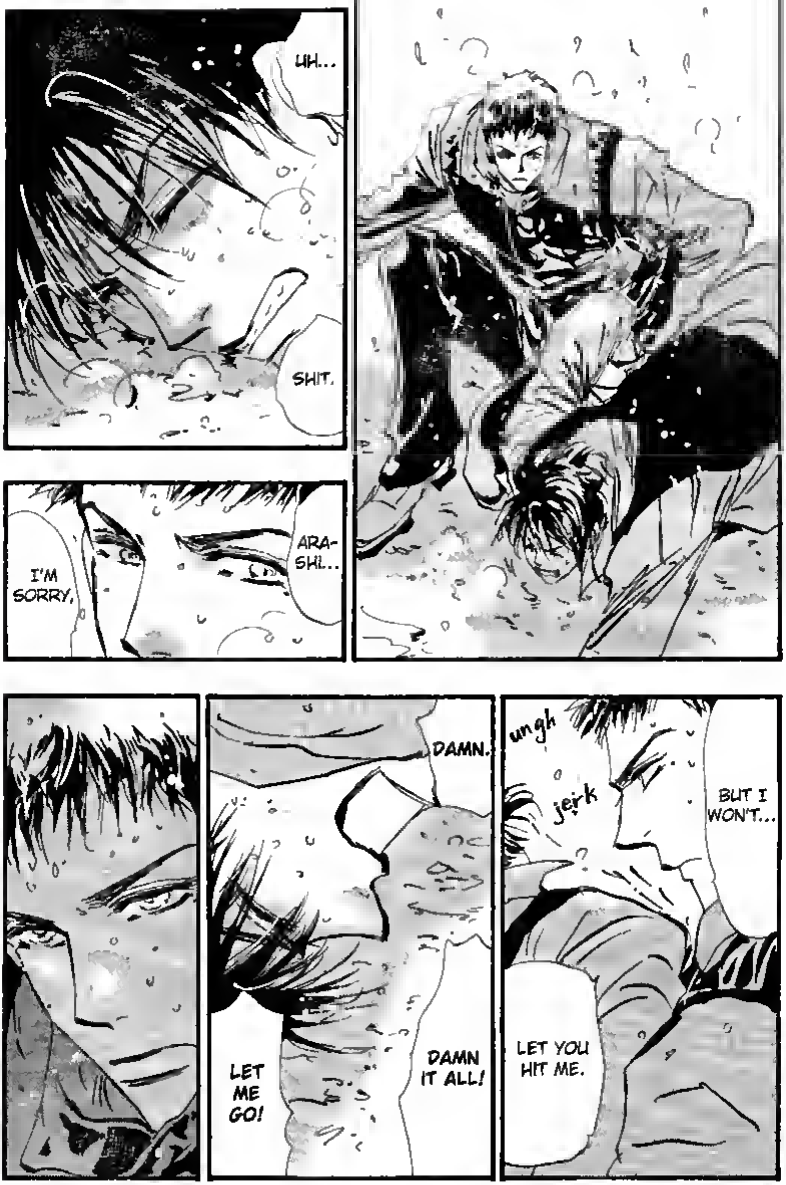
ARA-
SHI,
STOP
IT!
STOP
IT!
OR I'LL
HURT YOU,
ARASHI!

YOU SAVED MY LIFE ON THAT SHIP.
YOU HELPED ME MANY TIMES.
ANGO-SAN...
...ANGO,
ARA-SHI!
BUT...
THAT...
I KNOW ABOUT YOUR HARD-SHIPS,
AND YOUR TRAUMA.
AS WELL AS YOUR BITTER EXPERI-ENCES,

IS NO EXCUSE...
FOR HURTING HANA, ANGO!!
OOF!
hah

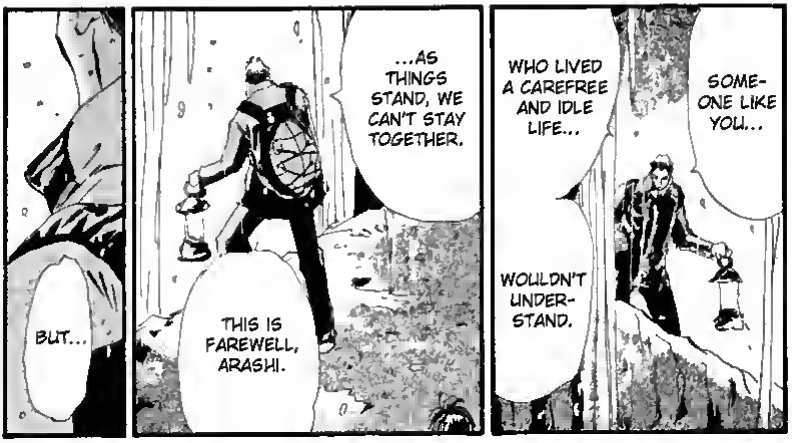

UH...
SHIT.
ARA-SHI...
I'M SORRY.
DAMN.
LET ME GO!
DAMN IT ALL!
ungh
jerk
BUT I WON'T...
LET YOU HIT ME.

ARE YOU SATISFIED?
hah
THUD
IT WAS THE SAME WITH ARAMAKI.
phew
WHEN HE THOUGHT THAT HANA DIED...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HE'S ACCOMPANIED BY DOGS.
A SURVIVOR OF TEAM WINTER.
Hey, I'm not done yet.
ARAMAKI ...?

... ARASHI,
HANA SEEMED TO FEEL THE SAME WAY.
SHE'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT YOU.
HE LIKED HANA, I SUPPOSE.
BECAUSE HE WAS ALWAYS BY HER SIDE.
clatter

IT LEFT A BAD AFTER-TASTE,
AND I WANT TO FORGET ABOUT IT ALREADY.
I...
AS WELL AS MY FRIENDS, SUFFERED ENOUGH.
I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR THINKING THAT I DID SOMETHING WRONG...
BUT I DON'T FEEL OBLIGED TO APOLOGIZE TO HANA.

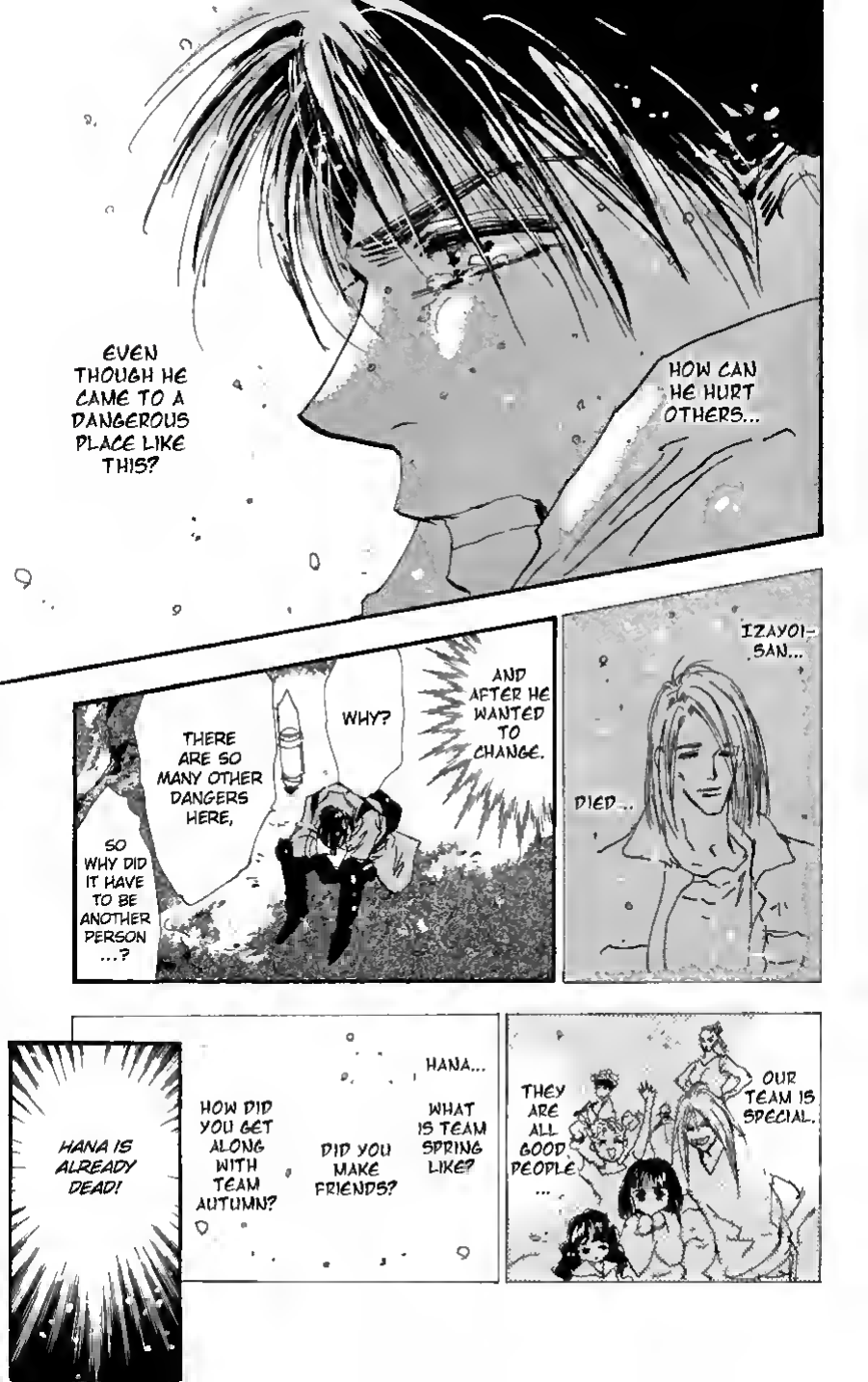
DON'T ...
AL-WAYS...
THINK...
THAT ONLY YOU ARE A VICTIM.
SS#
SS#
DON'T THINK THAT YOU HAVE A RIGHT...
TO HURT OTHERS.


BUT...
THIS IS FAREWELL, ARASHI.
...AS THINGS STAND, WE CAN'T STAY TOGETHER.
WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.
WHO LIVED A CAREFREE AND IDLE LIFE...
SOME-ONE LIKE YOU...

THAT YOU HATE ME NOW.
FOR SOME REASON,
IT MAKES ME A LITTLE SAD...

AN...
WHOOSH
Splosh
Splash
Splash
Splash
Splash
SS+

I'M SAD ABOUT IT TOO.
DON'T...
ALWAYS THINK...
THAT YOU'RE A VICTIM.
BECAUSE THAT WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS HARDER.
SHIT.
HANA...
I'M SORRY.
HANA...
HE WAS TOO STRONG.
THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT THAT YOU'D BE FINE.
Got it.
YOU AREN'T BOTHERED BY BUGS AT ALL,
YOU'RE USED TO CAMPING,
AND YOU'RE A LOT STRONGER THAN I AM.


EVEN THOUGH HE CAME TO A DANGEROUS PLACE LIKE THIS?
HOW CAN HE HURT OTHERS...
IZAYOI-SAN...
DIED...
AND AFTER HE WANTED TO CHANGE.
WHY?
THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER DANGERS HERE,
SO WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ANOTHER PERSON ...?
HANA...
HOW DID YOU GET ALONG WITH TEAM AUTUMN?
DID YOU MAKE FRIENDS?
WHAT IS TEAM SPRING LIKE?
THEY ARE ALL GOOD PEOPLE ...
OUR TEAM IS SPECIAL.
HANA IS ALREADY DEAD!

SHE'S ALIVE.
OTHERWISE, IT'D BE MEANINGLESS FOR ME TO BE HERE.
EVEN IF I HAVE TO BECOME A TATTERED LONER LIKE THAT GUY...
ARAMAKI...?
I'LL FIND HER, NO MATTER WHAT.
I'LL SEARCH FOR HER. EVEN IF IT TAKES MY WHOLE LIFE.

splish
splish

splish
splish

hah

WHAT'S UP WITH THAT, ARAMAKI?!
ARAMAKI...
HE WAS ALWAYS BY HANA'S SIDE...

DON'T ALWAYS THINK...
THAT ONLY YOU ARE A VICTIM.
SHUT UP!
SPLISH
YOU DON'T HAVE A RIGHT TO HURT OTHERS.
phew
I DO, DAMN IT!
SHUT UP!
SPLISH
wlwine
ANY-WAY...
SIGH
WHERE AM I?
RYO WOULD LECTURE ME AGAIN...
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU REVEALED EVERYTHING!
sigh

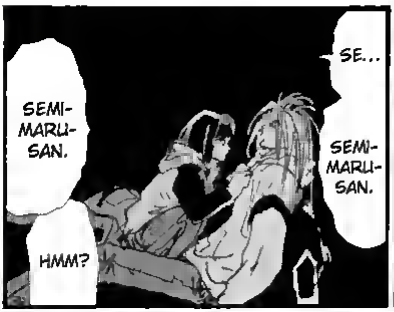
A DOG?
woof
IS IT HARU'S DOG? It looks similar.
yap yap
OR NOT?
I CAN'T TELL.
You don't belong to Aramaki, do you?
NO,
I'M NOT GENGORO.
yap yap yap
I CAN'T TALK WITH ANIMALS.
SSH
IS SOME-ONE HERE?!
IS HARU WITH YOU?
SSH
I'LL CONTINUE ON MY OWN.
SO DO AS YOU PLEASE.

stomp
stomp
SO, IN OTHER WORDS,
EVERYONE EXCEPT NIJIKO-SAN WENT MISSING...
WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
ARASHI BROUGHT IT UP.
I...
PROB-ABLY...
DID SOME-THING STUPID
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
THEY'RE A PEST.

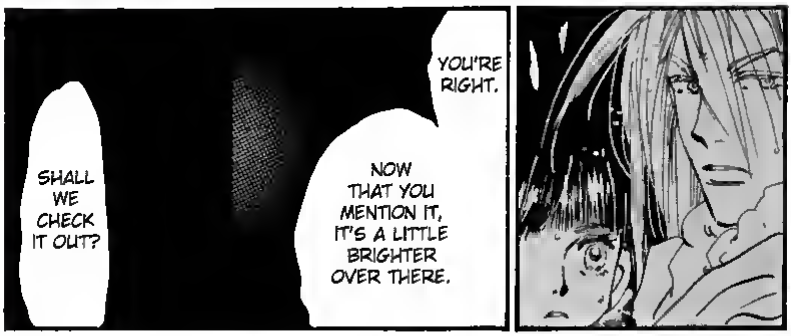
TO BRING THEM ON THIS ISLAND
IT WAS A BIG MISTAKE...
NOT ONLY I...
BUT EVERYONE ELSE WAS DECEIVED BY HALLUCINATIONS TOO,
AND STRAYED OFF INTO THIS ANTS NEST?
CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THOSE HALLUCINATIONS...
BUT I DIDN'T WEAR THOSE WHEN I CAME HERE THE FIRST TIME.
WITH A MASK AND GOGGLES?
IS THE SUBSTANCE THAT TRIGGERS IT WEAKER DURING THE RAINY SEASON?
WHY?
HAS THE CONCENTRATION CHANGED?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
CRICK
WHAT BECAME OF KURUMI?
IF BAN WAS WITH HER, SHE'D BE FINE THOUGH...

RUSTLE
RUSTLE

We've got nothing to do, do we, Director?
But...
that we have to go on with only our bleak everyday life is distressing.
Half a year has passed since that day.
Everyone seems to have calmed down.
The disk will start playing now.
whir

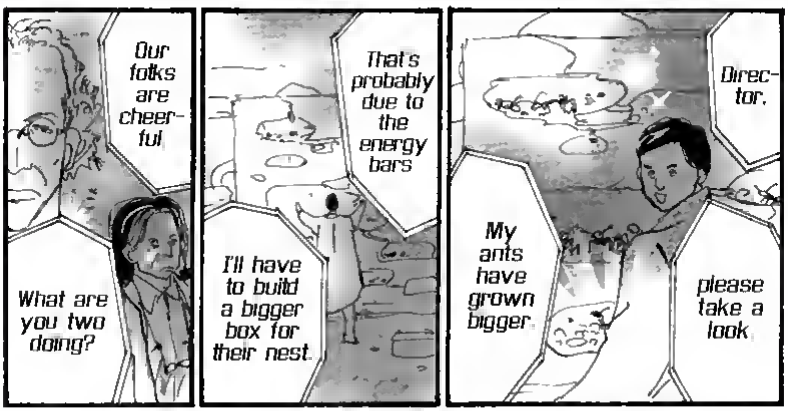

SE..
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
HMM?

WHAT?!
I HEAR SOME KIND OF VOICES.
SOME-HOW...


YOU'RE RIGHT.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IT'S A LITTLE BRIGHTER OVER THERE.
SHALL WE CHECK IT OUT?

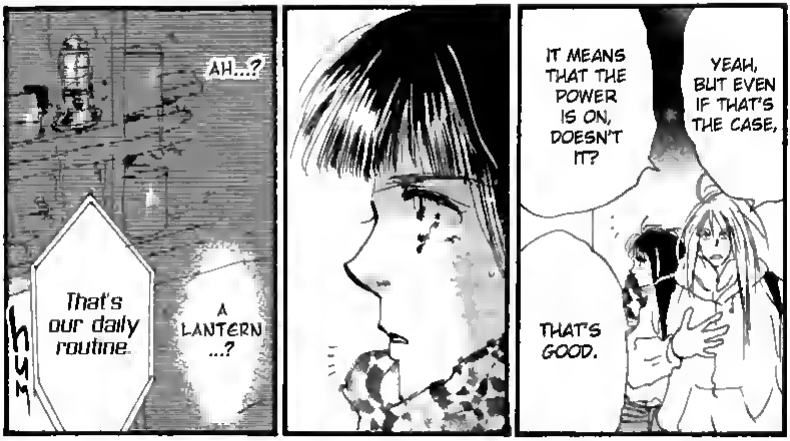
THE LIGHTS ARE ON.
THERE ARE VOICES.
WE'RE SAVED.
WE'RE SAVED...!
THERE'S SOMEONE THERE.
WATCH YOUR STEP.
SLOWLY, SLOWLY.
TAP
TAP
TAP
IF THERE WAS A STAIRCASE, IT'D BE DANGER-OUS.
But...
that we have to go on with only our bleak everyday life is distressing
We've got nothing to do, do we, Director?
OH...

WHO'S THAT...?

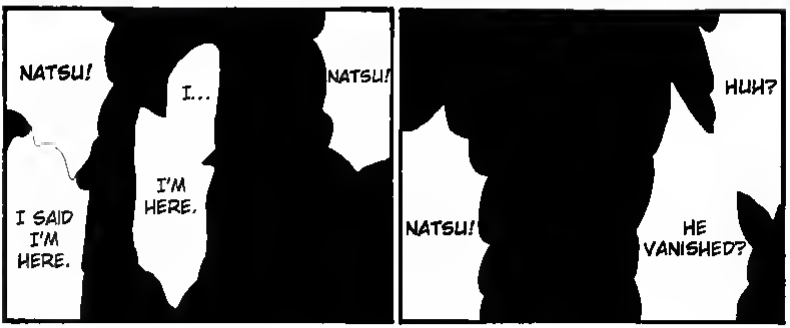

Our folks are cheerful.
What are you two doing?
That's probably due to the energy bars.
I'll have to build a bigger box for their nest.
Director.
My ants have grown bigger.
please take a look.

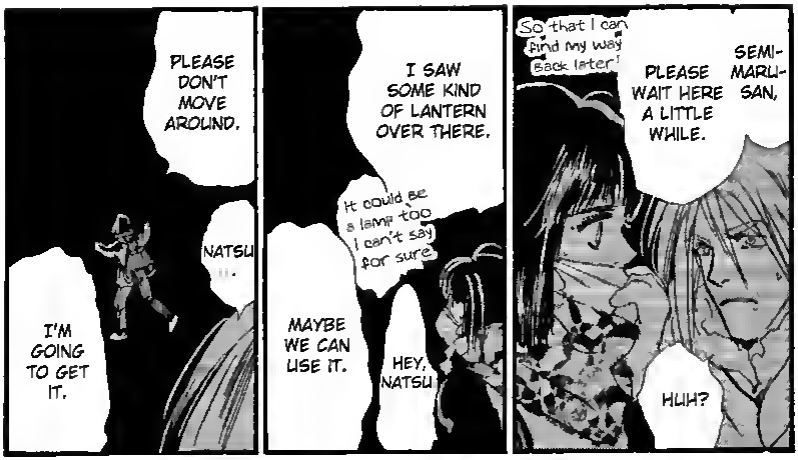
so we're trying to improve the cleaning robots.
Oh. We've got time on our hands.

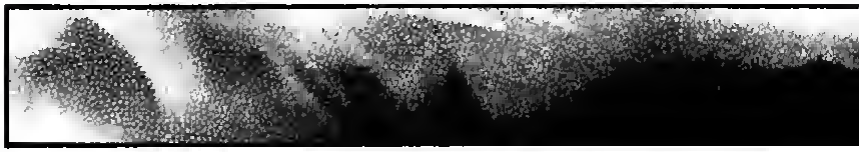
DID SOMEONE START THIS?!
Hello!
IS SOME-ONE THERE?!
IT ISN'T PEO-PLE.
TO ME,
WHAT'S THIS?
Some play?
IT LOOKS LIKE SOME ...HOLO-GRAM, DOESN'T IT?
It's slightly transparent
or goal left, either.
We have no hope..
HELLO!
IS SOME-ONE THERE?!
HEY!
ANSWER ME!
LIKE ON THAT SHIP...
MAYBE IT STARTED PLAYING ON ITS OWN,

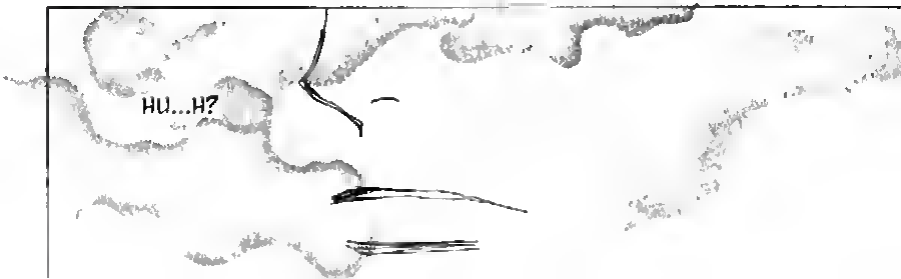

AH...?
That's our daily routine.
hum
A LANTERN ...?
IT MEANS THAT THE POWER IS ON, DOESN'T IT?
YEAH, BUT EVEN IF THAT'S THE CASE,
THAT'S GOOD.

Poof

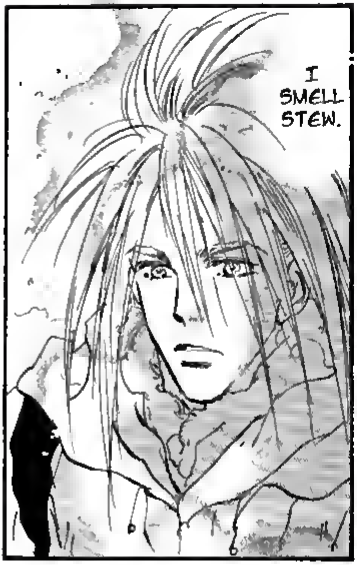

NATSU!
I...
NATSU!
I'M HERE.
I SAID I'M HERE.
HUH?
NATSU!
HE VANISHED?

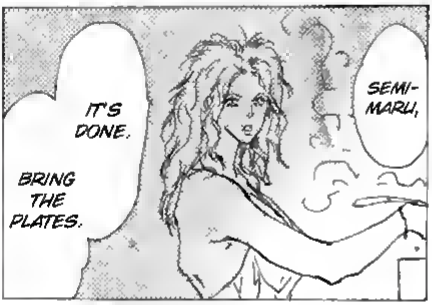

PLEASE DON'T MOVE AROUND.
NATSU!!
I'M GOING TO GET IT.
I SAW SOME KIND OF LANTERN OVER THERE.
It could be a lamp too. I can't say for sure.
MAYBE WE CAN USE IT.
HEY, NATSU!
SEMI-MARU-SAN,
PLEASE WAIT HERE A LITTLE WHILE.
So that I can find my way back later!
HUH?



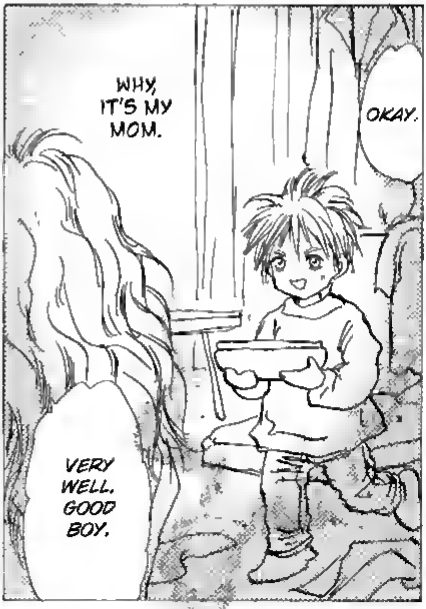

HU...H?

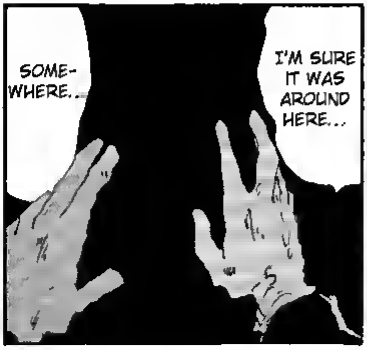
SEMI-MARU.
NO, IT MUST BE MY IMAGINATION...


I SMELL STEW.


SEMI-MARU.
IT'S DONE.
BRING THE PLATES.

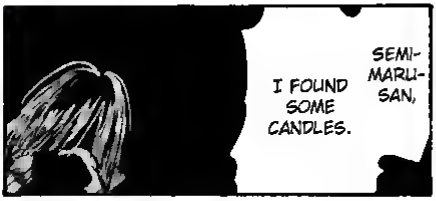
THE LAN-TERN.
THE LAN-TERN...


WHY, IT'S MY MOM.
OKAY.
VERY WELL, GOOD BOY.


SOME-WHERE..
I'M SURE IT WAS AROUND HERE...

ARE YOU GOING TO WORK?
NOPE. I'M OFF TODAY.
TOMORROW TOO.
AFTER-WARDS, SHE'D BE NICE TO ME..
FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS.
MY MOM WOULD PREPARE STEW FOR ME...
WHEN SHE GOT DUMPED BY A MAN.
REALLY ?!
I'M GOING TO TAKE A LONG VACA-TION.
I'LL SPEND IT WITH YOU.
THE LAN-TERN?!
IS IT EMPTY?
REALLY ?!
I'LL NEED OIL OR GAS...

IT'S A CANDLE!
CANDLES?!
It smells like one too


I FOUND SOME CANDLES.
SEMI-MARU-SAN,

PLEASE ANSWER.
SEMI-MARU-SAN,
WHERE ARE YOU?

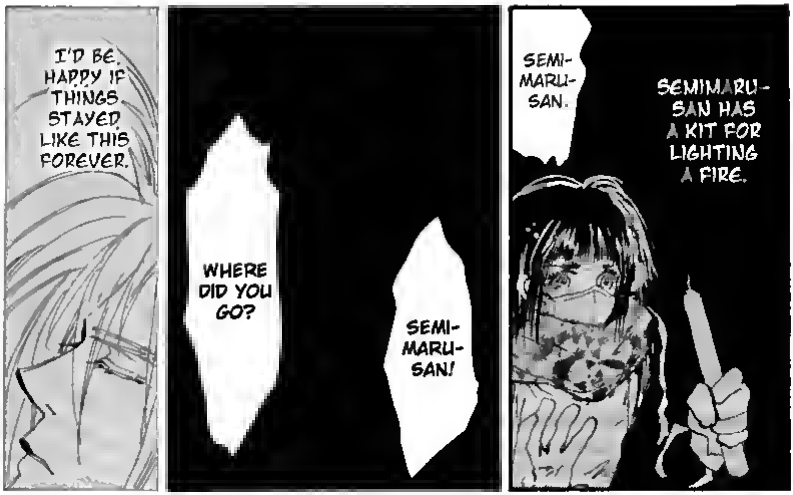
SEMI-MARU-SAN?

SEMIMARU-SAN!

LET'S SLEEP TO-GETHER.
YEAH, TODAY, TOMORROW, THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, AND JUST EVERY DAY.
WOULD THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY?

WE CAN TAKE TRIPS EVERY DAY. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?
WHEREVER IS FINE WITH ME.
BUT I LIKE HOME BEST.

SEMI-MARU-SAN,
ANSWER ME.
SEMI-MARU-SAN.


I'D BE HAPPY IF THINGS STAYED LIKE THIS FOREVER.
WHERE DID YOU GO?
SEMI-MARU-SAN!
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
SEMIMARU-SAN HAS A KIT FOR LIGHTING A FIRE.

WAH!
WHIRR

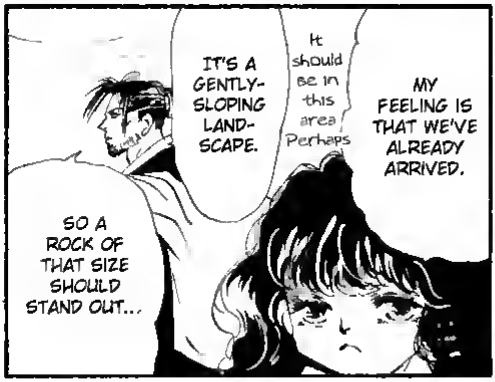
spend our days idly
We, the survivors,
Today, it's been three years since that day..
HIM AGAIN!

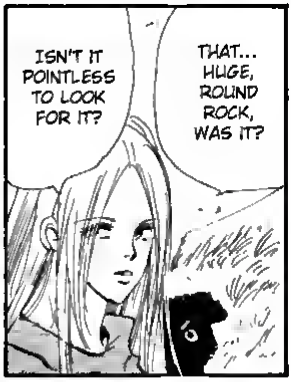
Director, it's horrible!
The ants escaped.
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
I CAN SEE!
They escaped?!
Not a single one is left!
The eggs and larvae either!
I'm very sorry
Big ants like them will dig holes all over the place.
You should have watched them better
PLEASE STOP SLEEPING.
SEMI-MARU-SAN!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
Well, but..
you could also say that it doesn't matter now.
If they occupied the power generator, we'd be in trouble
they could even bring the trains to a standstill
If the ants bored into the panel boards.

pat
pat
SEMI-MARU-SAN,
PLEASE WAKE UP!
THEY VAN-ISHED AGAIN
WHAT IS THAT?!
IT'S SCARY!
Pof
SEMI-MARU-SAN!
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE,
It probably won't be possible in our lifetime
We still can't go outside.
Eep!
Two more years have passed.
hum

Some of our staff members
had some kind of hallucination.
Ah, that's right.
Yesterday, as well as today,
strange things occurred.
We don't know the state of things on Sado.
There is no hope,
and we're just locked on this island.

whoosh


IT'S A GENTLY-SLOPING LAND-SCAPE.
It should be in this area! Perhaps
MY FEELING IS THAT WE'VE ALREADY ARRIVED.
SO A ROCK OF THAT SIZE SHOULD STAND OUT...


ISN'T IT POINTLESS TO LOOK FOR IT?
THAT... HUGE, ROUND ROCK, WAS IT?

WAIT A MINUTE.
ISN'T THAT IT?
HIBARI,
OF MY HOUSE LEFT.
THERE'S NO TRACE...

Rain Over Paradise
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Mountains Chapter 6

【— On —】

Rain Over Paradise
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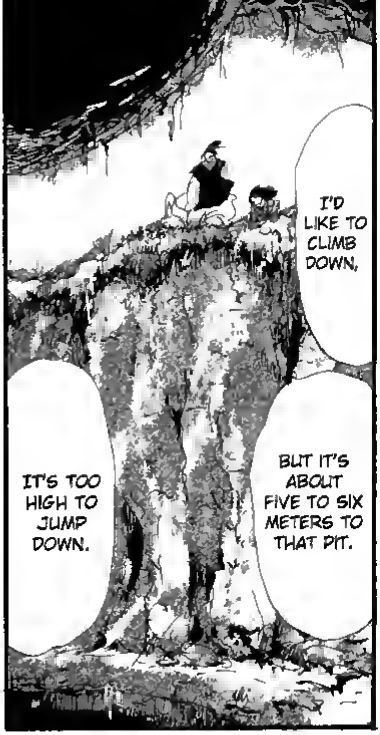
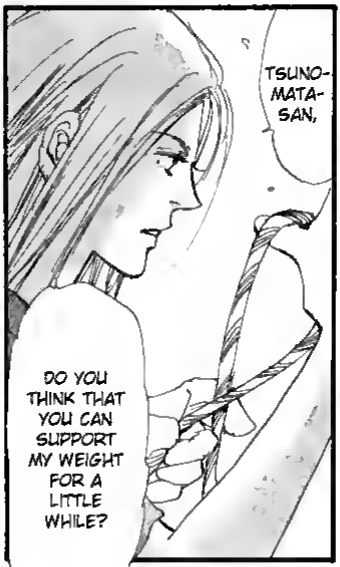
IT'S LIKE...
BENKEI'S SCISSOR ROCK NOW.
IT SEEMS THE GROUND BELOW HAS COLLAPSED,
AND ONLY THE ROCK REMAINED.
NOT REALLY.
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
Well, it must be a shock.
LOOK OVER HERE, HIBARI.
THERE WAS A SIGHTSEEING SPOT WITH THAT NAME...
BENKEI?
HERE ON SADO.
SO, THAT HUGE ROCK...
CONCEALED SOMETHING AFTER ALL.
THERE'S A PIT BENEATH THE ROCK.

THIS SUBSIDENCE ISN'T AS DEEP AS AT OTHERS PLACES.
THE GROUND MUST BE HARD.

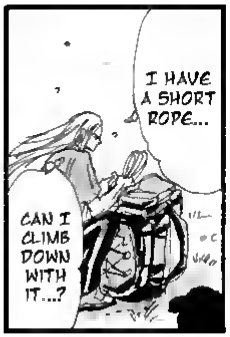

I'D LIKE TO CLIMB DOWN.
BUT IT'S ABOUT FIVE TO SIX METERS TO THAT PIT.
IT'S TOO HIGH TO JUMP DOWN.

HANA WOULD PROBABLY BE DOWN THERE IN A WINK.
TSUNOTCHI, CLIMB DOWN.

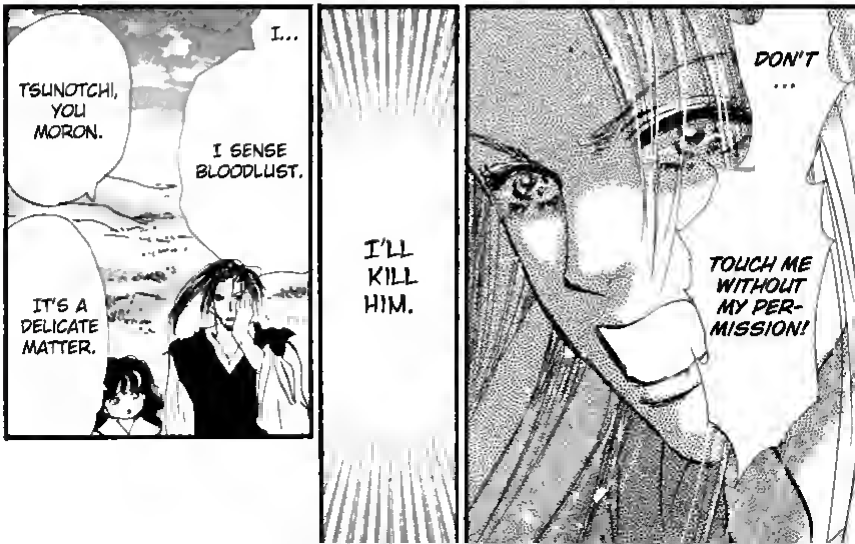
YOU?

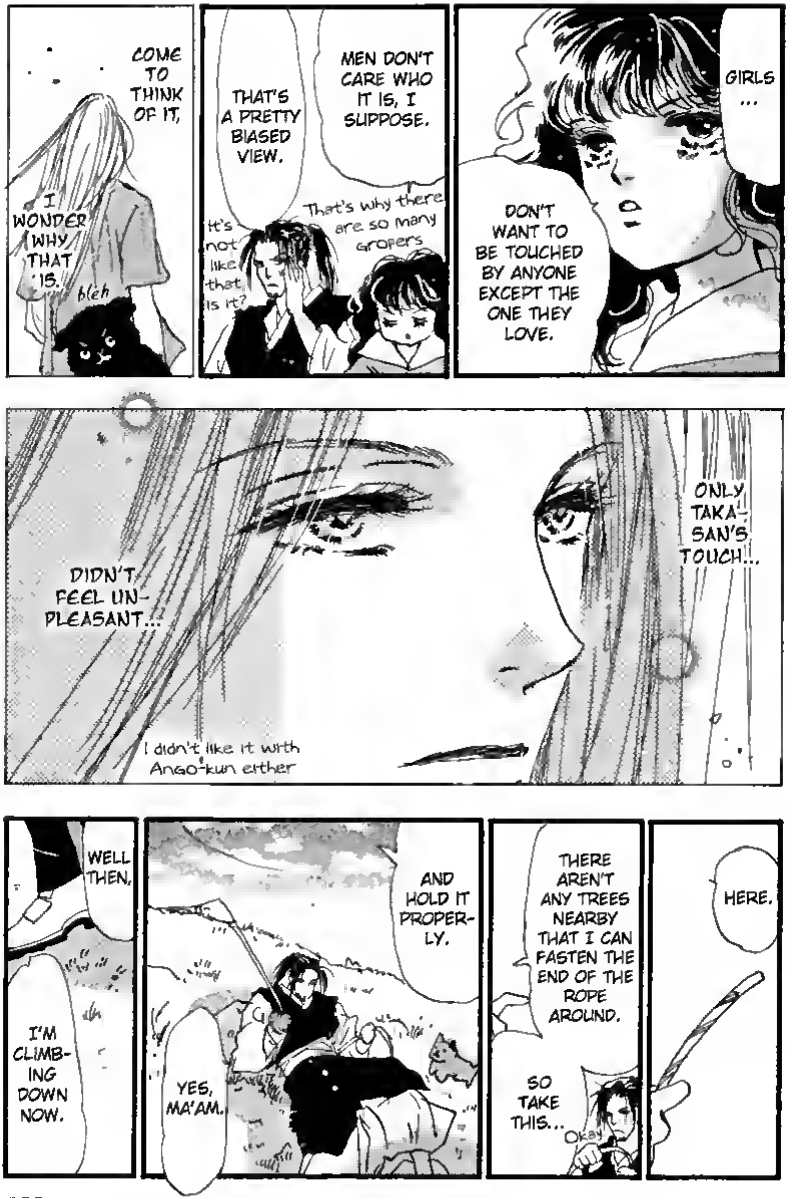

TSUNO-MATA-SAN,
DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN SUPPORT MY WEIGHT FOR A LITTLE WHILE?

thud

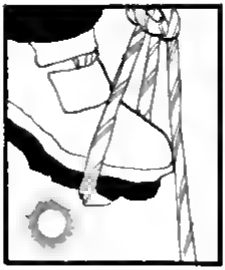

I HAVE A SHORT ROPE...
CAN I CLIMB DOWN WITH IT...?

WHACK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
help
WELL, I GUESS I CAN.
EEK!
With her elbow
OW...
thud
IF I DON'T TEST IT, I WON'T KNOW.


I...
TSUNOTCHI, YOU MORON.
I SENSE BLOODLUST.
IT'S A DELICATE MATTER.
I'LL KILL HIM.
DON'T ...
TOUCH ME WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!

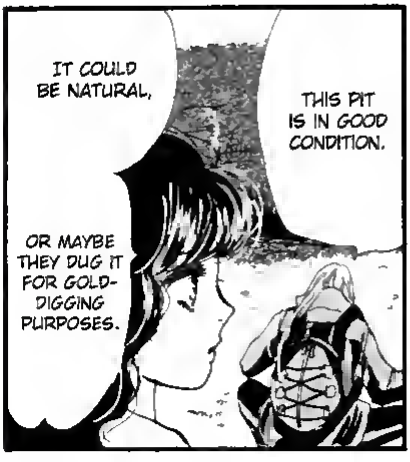

COME TO THINK OF IT,
I WONDER WHY THAT IS.
bleh
MEN DON'T CARE WHO IT IS, I SUPPOSE.
THAT'S A PRETTY BIASED VIEW.
That's why there are so many gropers
It's not like that, is it?
GIRLS ...
DON'T WANT TO BE TOUCHED BY ANYONE EXCEPT THE ONE THEY LOVE.
DIDN'T FEEL UN-PLEASANT...
I didn't like it with Ango-kun either
ONLY TAKA-SAN'S TOUCH...
WELL THEN,
I'M CLIMB-ING DOWN NOW.
YES, MA'AM.
AND HOLD IT PROPER-LY.
THERE AREN'T ANY TREES NEARBY THAT I CAN FASTEN THE END OF THE ROPE AROUND.
SO TAKE THIS...
Okay
HERE.

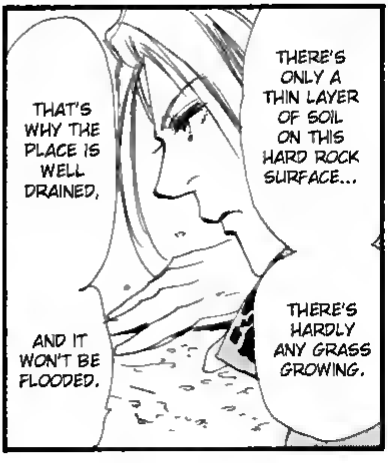
tap

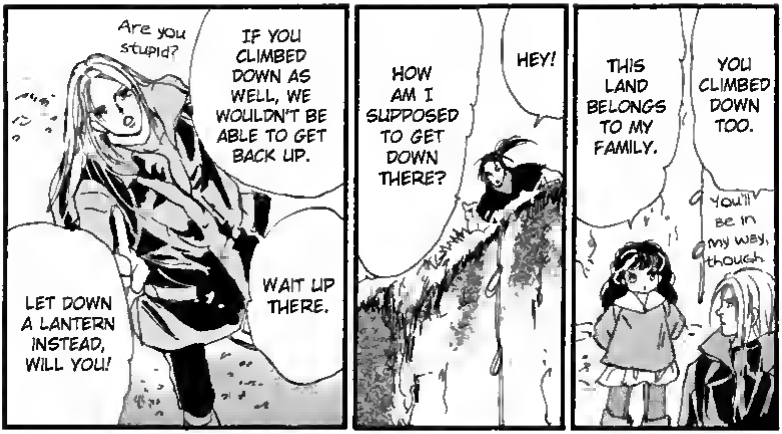


crunch

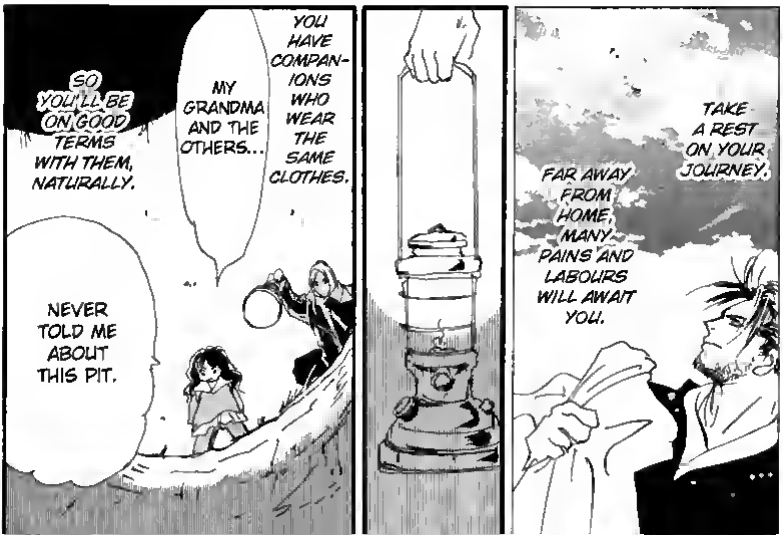
A ROPE CAN BE USED IN MANY WAYS.
She's amazing.
HEH..
WITH THIS, I CAN CLIMB DOWN TOO.


IT COULD BE NATURAL,
THIS PIT IS IN GOOD CONDITION.
OR MAYBE THEY DUG IT FOR GOLD-DIGGING PURPOSES.


THERE'S ONLY A THIN LAYER OF SOIL ON THIS HARD ROCK SURFACE...
THAT'S WHY THE PLACE IS WELL DRAINED,
THERE'S HARDLY ANY GRASS GROWING.
AND IT WON'T BE FLOODED.


Are you stupid?
IF YOU CLIMBED DOWN AS WELL, WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET BACK UP.
LET DOWN A LANTERN INSTEAD, WILL YOU!
WAIT UP THERE.
HEY!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET DOWN THERE?
THIS LAND BELONGS TO MY FAMILY.
YOU CLIMBED DOWN TOO.
You'll be in my way, though.

SLAVE DRIVER.
YES, YES.

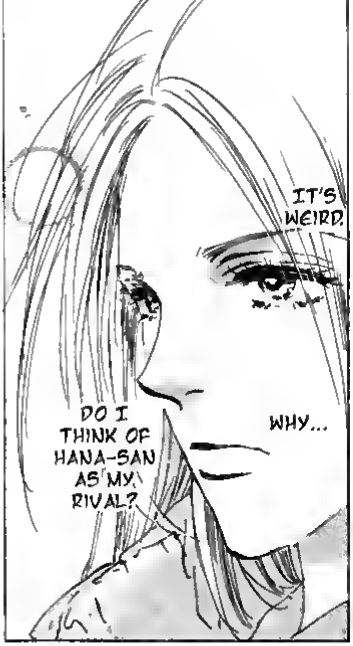

SO YOU'LL BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH THEM, NATURALLY.
MY GRANDMA AND THE OTHERS...
YOU HAVE COMPANIONS WHO WEAR THE SAME CLOTHES.
NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT THIS PIT.
FAR AWAY FROM HOME, MANY PAINS AND LABOURS WILL AWAIT YOU.
TAKE A REST ON YOUR JOURNEY.

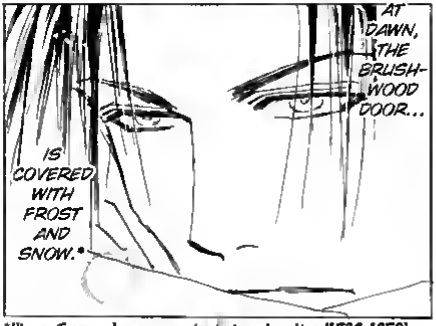
Don't go too far
Yap Yap
BE CAREFUL!

...
BECAUSE...
HANA-SAN WOULD DEFINITELY GO, WOULDN'T SHE?
...?

HEY, WAIT A SEC!
ARE YOU GOING TO ENTER THAT PIT?

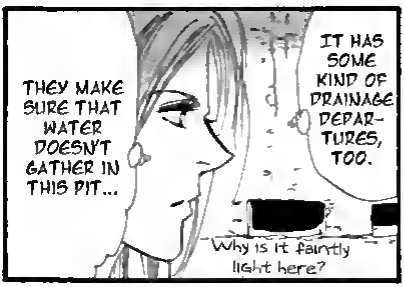
I'LL GO DOWN.
IT'S MADE IN A WAY THAT ENABLES YOU TO CLIMB DOWN.
Hey, it looks fun!

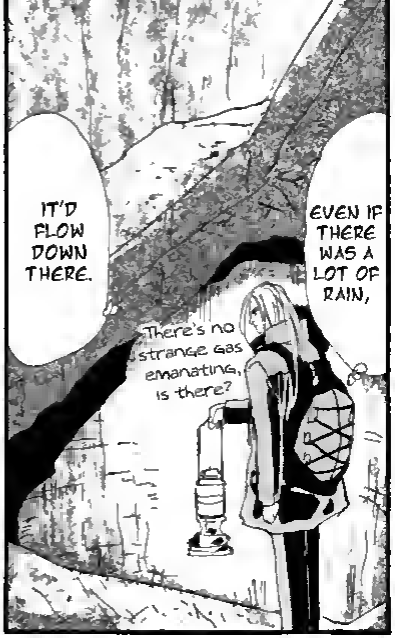


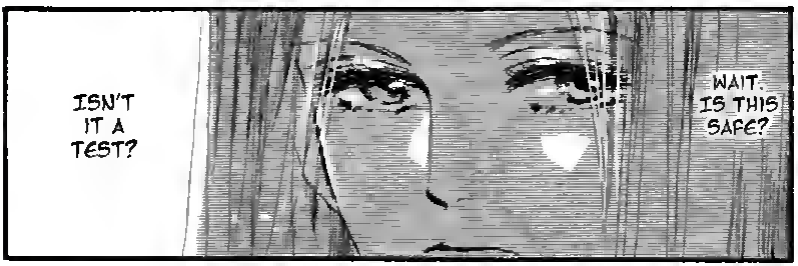


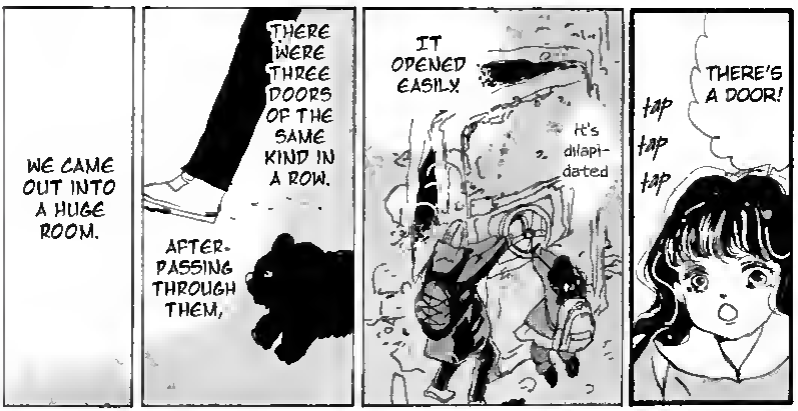
*Hirose Tanso, Japanese scientist and writer (1782-1856)

NEXT, IT'S CLIMBING.


THEY MAKE SURE THAT WATER DOESN'T GATHER IN THIS PIT...
IT HAS SOME KIND OF DRAINAGE DEPARTURES, TOO.
Why is it faintly light here?


IT'D FLOW DOWN THERE.
EVEN IF THERE WAS A LOT OF RAIN,
There's no strange gas emanating, is there?

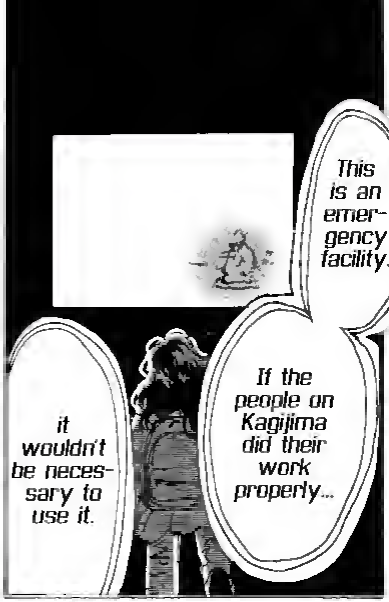

ISN'T IT A TEST?
WAIT. IS THIS SAFE?

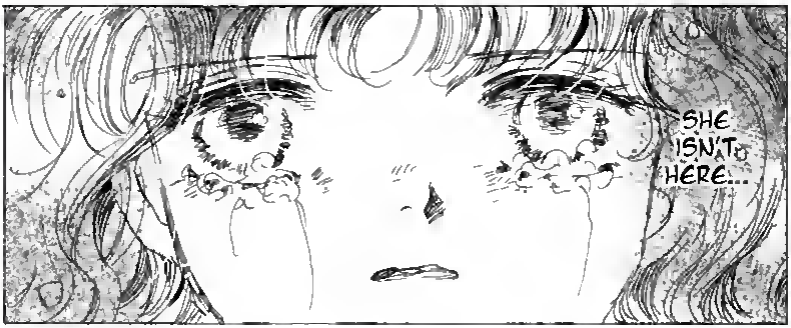

WE CAME OUT INTO A HUGE ROOM.
AFTER-PASSING THROUGH THEM,
THERE WERE THREE DOORS OF THE SAME KIND IN A ROW.
IT OPENED EASILY
It's dilapidated
THERE'S A DOOR!
tap
tap
tap

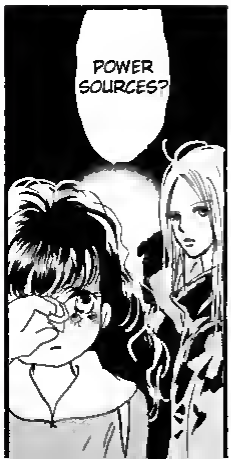
I TOLD YOU THAT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING
DID THEY GIVE YOU A KEY OR SOME-THING?
DON'T YOU KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT THIS?
THERE ISN'T ANYTHING HERE.
A DEAD END?
wipe wipe
WHAT'S THIS MARK?
Shut up
IT'S A TREE WHICH GROWS IN WARM REGIONS...
THE LEAF OF A TIGER MUL-BERRY.
IT'S OUR FAMILY CREST...
hum
MUL-BERRY ?
LEAVES OF MUL-BERRIES DON'T LOOK LIKE THIS

Hibari, is that you?
So you came after all
G...
GRAND-MA?
clack
Come on in
GRANDMA, ARE YOU THERE?
GRAND-MA.
It is made
to open to your or Hotaru's finger-prints.
GRAND-MA!
EVEN THOUGH THE ROCK REMAINED,
NEITHER OUR HOUSE NOR THE OUTHOUSE, THE SMALL SHRINE,
OR ANYTHING ELSE IS LEFT.
GRAND-MA!!

GRAND...
what happened over there
I wonder...
Are they still alive?
A VIDEO-TAPING...


This is an emergency facility.
If the people on Kagijima did their work properly...
it wouldn't be necessary to use it.


SHE ISN'T HERE...


POWER SOURCES?

First,
you need to activate several power sources.
All right, now switch them on.

SHE ISN'T HERE...
AFTER ALL...

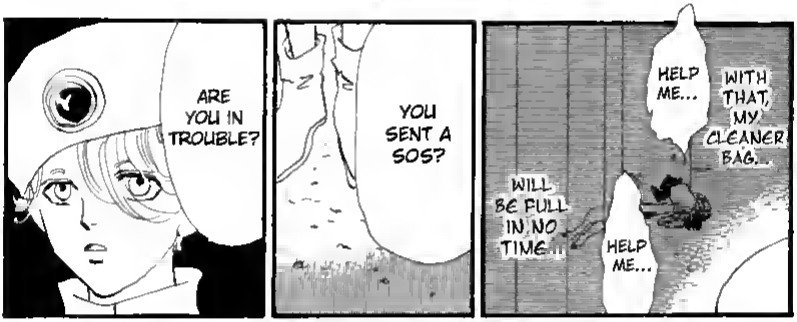
MY BODY IS CREAKY.
I NEED TO HAVE IT SERVICED.
THE DATE WAS RESET,
SO I CAN'T TELL.
I HAVE THE FEELING THAT I'VE BEEN PUT TO SLEEP FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
WHAT— YEAR IS IT NOW?
VERY WELL.
ALL RIGHT.
LET'S GET TO WORK.

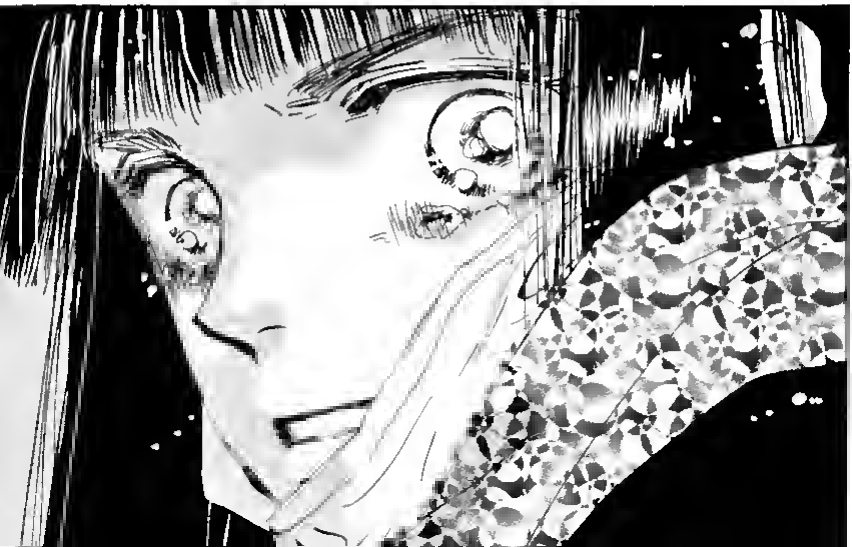
IN THE DISTANCE, THE POWER HAS BEEN SWITCHED ON.

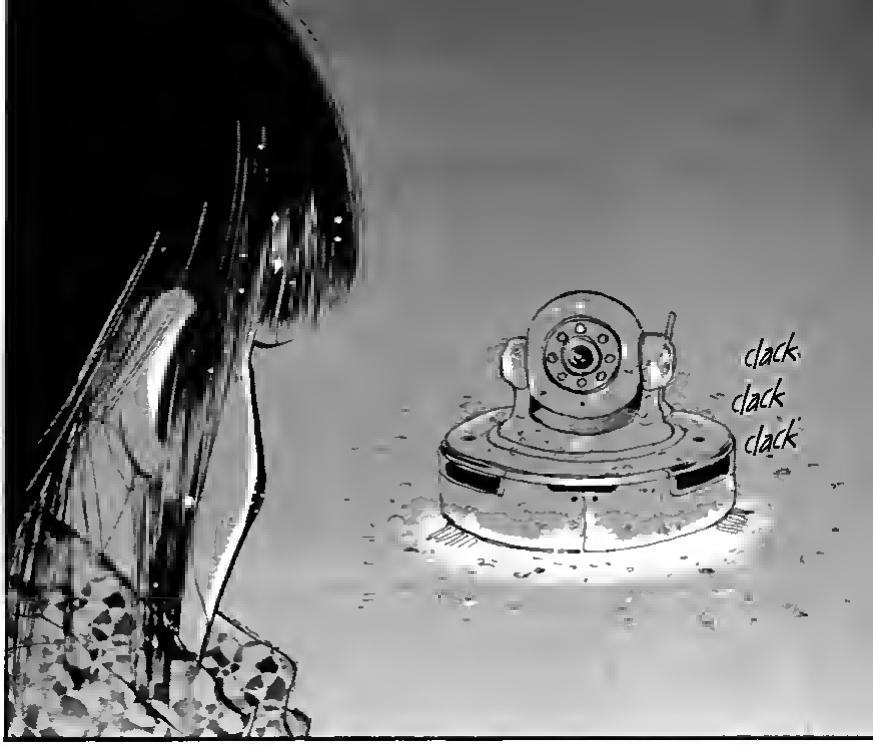
PLEASE WAKE UP.
SEMI-MARU-SAN,
... SAN.
SEMIMARU-SAN.
SEMIMARU-SAN,
THERE'S NOBODY HERE.
NOBODY ELSE.
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!
THE HOLOGRAM OF THAT STRANGE OLD MAN...
VAN-ISHED TOO,
JUST WHEN HE'D STARTED TO TALK ABOUT SOME-THING.
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
HE'S NOT SICK, OR IS HE?!
SOME-THING ACUTE WITH HIS BRAIN OR HEART...
SEMI-MARU-SAN.

PLEASE HELP ME.
tok
tok
ISN'T THERE ANY-BODY?
tok
HELP ME.
SOME-BODY.
tok
tok
SOME-BODY.
HELP ME!
HELP ME...
tok
AN-SWER.
SOME-BODY!
HELP ME,
tok
tok
tok
HELP ME.
tok
SOME-BODY.

ANY-WAY,
THE FLOOR SURE IS DUSTY.
I'LL TRY TO TRANSMIT A MESSAGE TO MY FELLOW WORKERS TOO.
MAYBE SOME OF THEM WOKE UP AS WELL.
SOME-BODY SEEMS TO BE IN TROUBLE.
I NEED TO CHECK IT OUT.
HUH?
THAT'S A SOS.


ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?
YOU SENT A SOS?
HELP ME...
WITH THAT, MY CLEANER BAG...
WILL BE FULL IN NO TIME...
HELP ME...




clack
clack
clack

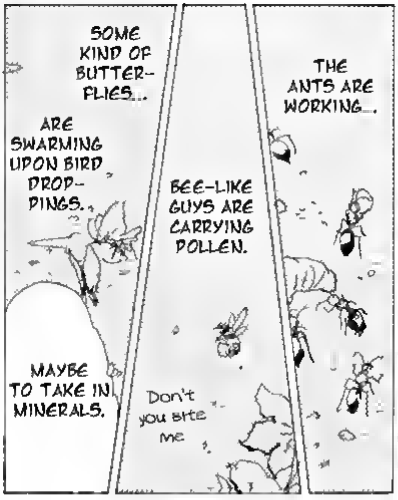
Are you an outsider?
I tried to run a face recognition, but you don't belong to our staff

SO I MIGHT BE MISTAKEN.
BUT I HAVE SOME MINOR MAL-FUNTIONS RIGHT NOW,

IT'S TALK-ING.
AH...
WAH.
I heard your SOS

WHAT'S ...
Eep...
WHA...
THAT?
I'm the improved cleaning robot model..
alias Peru. Peru from Perseus.
OH 4.

SEMI-MARU-SAN!
Eek!
Go away!
Wah!
WHAT'S THAT?
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?
SEMI-MARU-SAN.


SOME KIND OF BUTTER-FLIES...
ARE SWARMING UPON BIRD DROP-PINGS.
MAYBE TO TAKE IN MINERALS.
BEE-LIKE GUYS ARE CARRYING POLLEN.
Don't you bite me
THE ANTS ARE WORKING...

chir
chir
chir

MAYBE THIS DOME-SHAPED ROOM...
PROTECTED THEM.

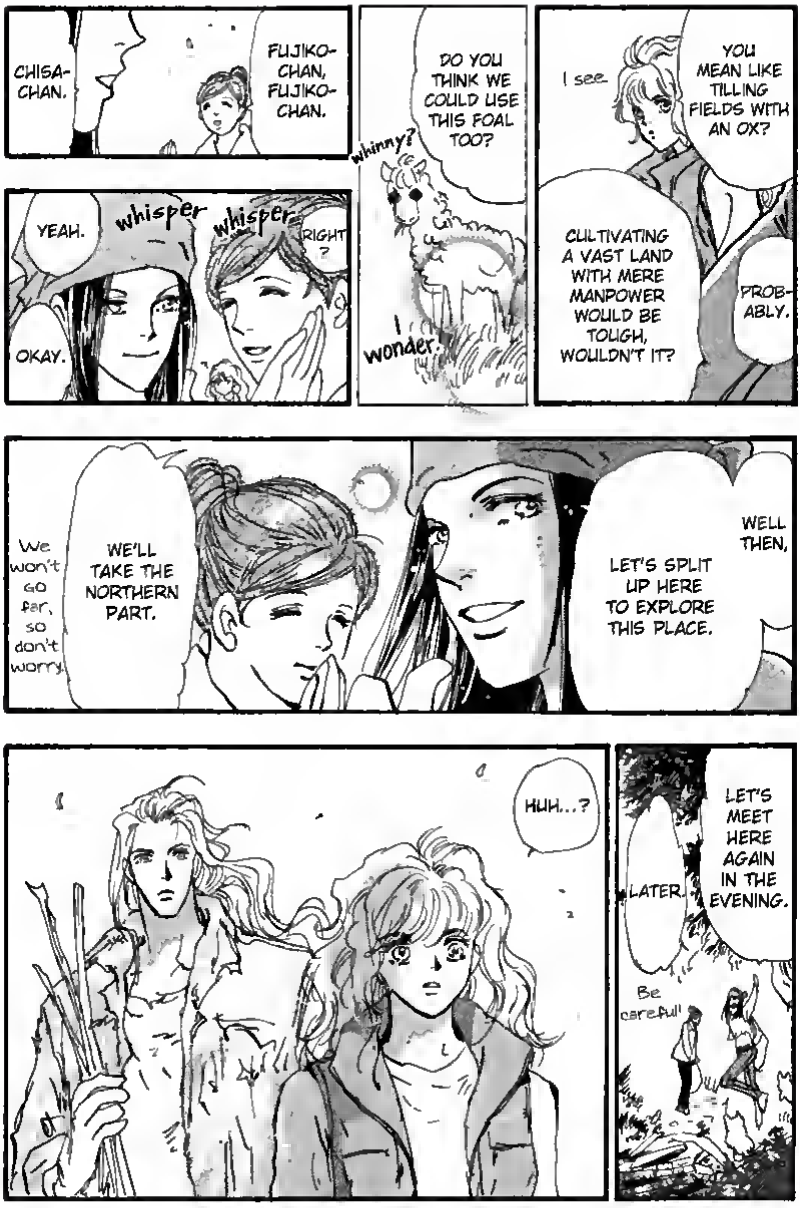
Crunch
Crunch

rustle
BEARS SOME RESEMBLANCE TO OUR OLD WORLD.
IT...
whinny

whinny
Who are you?
whinny,

DID YOU KNOW?
THAT THEY SAY THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PLACE BECOMING CIVILIZED OR NOT...
IS WHETHER THE CREATURES LIVING IN IT CAN MAKE USE OF IT?
That's one theory

FOR ALL THAT, IT CAN MAINTAIN THE RIGHT BALANCE...
WITHOUT ANY SPECIES INCREASING.
There must be carnivores around too
FUJIKO-CHAN.

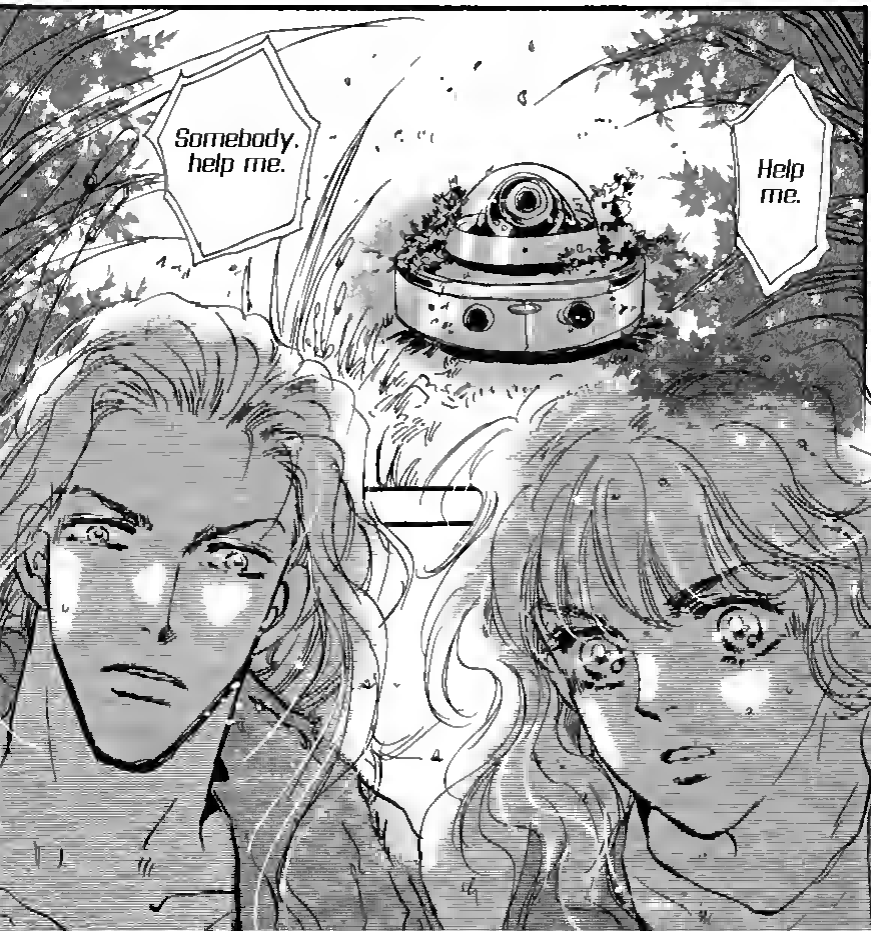

CHISA-CHAN.
FUJIKO-CHAN, FUJIKO-CHAN.
DO YOU THINK WE COULD USE THIS FOAL TOO?
whinny?
I wonder.
I see.
YOU MEAN LIKE TILLING FIELDS WITH AN OX?
CULTIVATING A VAST LAND WITH MERE MANPOWER WOULD BE TOUGH, WOULDN'T IT?
PROB-ABLY.
YEAH.
whisper
whisper
RIGHT?
OKAY.
WELL THEN,
LET'S SPLIT UP HERE TO EXPLORE THIS PLACE.
WE'LL TAKE THE NORTHERN PART.
We won't go far, so don't worry.
HUH...?
LET'S MEET HERE AGAIN IN THE EVENING.
LATER.
Be careful!

NOW SHE CAN FLIRT AWAY.
hee hee hee
ha ha ha
I GUESS THEY'RE DOING THIS OUT OF CONCERN FOR ME.
M... MAN.
BUT I WISH THEY'D STOP
HEY...
ISN'T THIS...
DIVISION WRONG?
Will they be all right?
We mustn't separate.
FUJI-KO-CHAN.
OH NO.
I'M KIND OF NERVOUS.
ARAMAKI-SAN...
WAS TRAVELLING TOGETHER WITH AYU-SAN...
WITH SOME-ONE...
COME TO THINK OF IT,
HE'S QUITE EXPERI-ENCED WITH BEING ALONE...

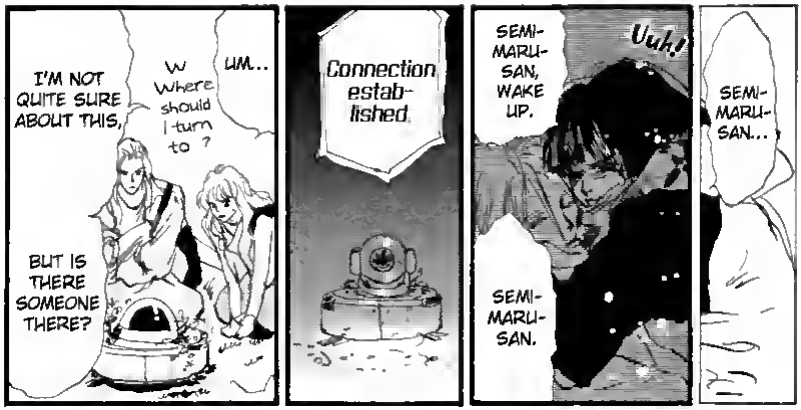
FASCI-NATING?
SHE'S FASCI-NATING.
AYU-SAN?
ARA-MAKI-SAN,
WHAT...
WAS AYU-SAN LIKE WHEN YOU WERE ALONE WITH HER?
AND EXTREMELY ATHLETIC.
STUDIOUS,
SHE'S A BIT UNSOPHISTI-CATED AND ECCENTRIC.
BUT SHE ISN'T AWARE OF IT HERSELF, I GUESS.
SHE'S REALLY SERIOUS,
Unsophisti-cated, you say?
I'M TOTALLY JEALOUS.
WHOA ...
No good, no good, no good...
...Help me...
BASE-BALL ?!
WE SHOULD ALL PLAY IT TOGETHER NEXT TIME.
SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO SWIM,
AND SHE PLAYED BASEBALL WITH ME.

tok
Help me,
somebody
HUH?
tok
Help me...
tok
Help me
woof woof
WHO IS THAT?!
HANA-SAN, OVER HERE.
tok
Help me.
tok
Somebody, help me
HUH? THE VOICE IS DIFFERENT.
FUJIKO-CHAN?! CHISA-CHAN?!
IT'S NOT THEM.
It's coming from all directions
stomp
stomp
stomp
stomp
Hana-san you're extremely athletic too

HANA-SAN,
THAT'S IT!
Help me.
THERE ISN'T ANYONE HERE.
HUH?
WHERE?!
rustle
WHERE?
Help me!


Somebody, help me.
Help me.

I've tried to run a face recognition, but it failed.
You're outsiders, aren't you?
I'm the improved cleaning robot model, DH 2.5.
alias Aru Aru from Argo.
creak
WHAT'S THAT?
I...
can't reveal the location to outsiders.
CONNECT US...?
WHERE TO?
HUH?
Should I connect you?
and he informed me about it too.
DH 4 received a SOS.
Hana-san, Get Back.
Do you want me to put you through?

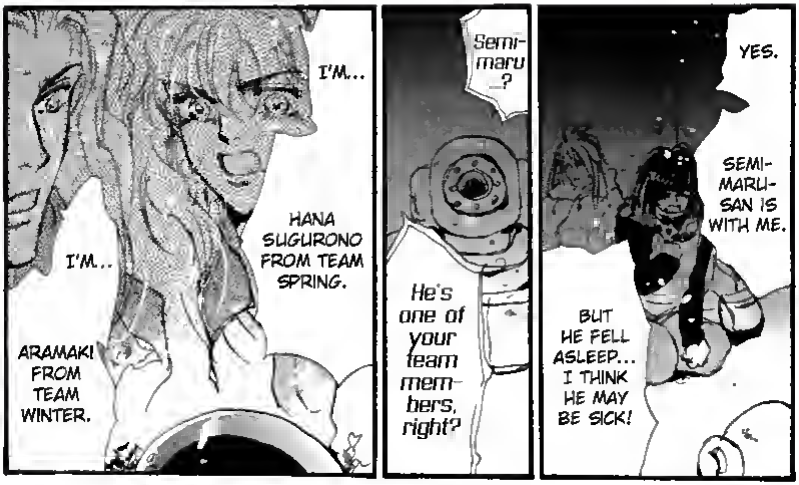

I'M NOT QUITE SURE ABOUT THIS,
Where should I turn to?
um...
BUT IS THERE SOMEONE THERE?
Connection established.
SEMI-MARU-SAN, WAKE UP.
Uuh!
SEMI-MARU-SAN.
SEMI-MARU-SAN...

but well,
Um.
there's this strange robot...
I'm not sure what happened.
and it asked us...

Is there someone on the other end?

Can you hear me?
if we wanted it to connect us, you see?

THERE'S SOMEONE THERE AFTER ALL!
WHAT?
REALLY?!
I...
I CAN HEAR YOU.
YES...
MY...
MY NAME...
IS NATSU.
I'M FROM TEAM SUMMER B.
NATSU, YOU SAY?
IWASHIMIZU NATSU-SAN?!
YOU LEFT US A LETTER A WHILE AGO, RIGHT?


I'M...
HANA SUGURONO FROM TEAM SPRING.
I'M...
ARAMAKI FROM TEAM WINTER.
Semi-maru-?
He's one of your team members, right?
YES.
SEMI-MARU-SAN IS WITH ME.
BUT HE FELL ASLEEP... I THINK HE MAY BE SICK!

HANA...
I'M HANA...

HANA-SAN...
HANA-SAN...
Yes!
HANA-SAN...
HANA-SAN...
WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?
WHAT PLACE IS IT CONNECTED WITH?
HANA-SAN...
NATSU-SAN?!

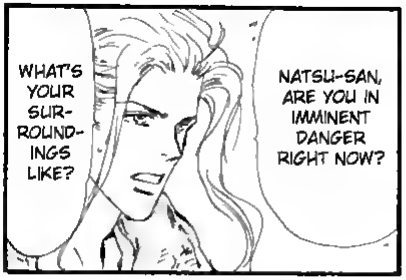
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT BECAME OF ARASHI-KUN.
I don't know if he's safe!

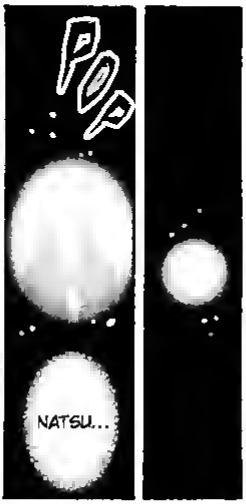
ARASHI AOTA ...?
DID HE TELL YOU ABOUT ME?
HE'S IN YOUR TEAM, RIGHT?
YES...
ARASHI.
TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR SITUATION
ARASHI!!
I...I think
NO...IT'S SMALLER.
WE WERE SCATTERED IN ALL DIREC-TIONS...
WHEN WE WENT UNDER-GROUND...
Island?
I'm sorry
YES...
Sado Island?
ON AN ISLAND...
A...ALL OF US ENTERED A FACILITY...

MEMBERS OF OTHER TEAMS...
WENT MISSING HERE TOO.
SHE'S A RELATIVE OF HIBARI-SAN'S, ISN'T SHE?
HO-TARU-CHAN ...?
SHE WAS ATTACKED BY ANTS?
HOTARU-CHAN WAS ATTACKED BY ANTS.
SEMIMARU-SAN AND I WERE WASHED AWAY,
AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW.
I heard that you were all living together at some point
and team sum-mer A
Yes, team autumn
OTHER TEAMS, YOU SAY?
hah
WE DON'T KNOW THE LOCA-TION...
NATSU-SAN, WE'RE ON SADO ISLAND.
SO WE MAY BE CLOSE.
TEAM AUTUMN TOO?!
WHAT ABOUT KURUMI-SAN?!
SO, HARU AND THE OTHERS AS WELL?!

DID ONE OF YOU...
BEAT A THEME SONG OF FF YESTER-DAY?
NATSU-SAN,
LIS-TEN.
AH,
SEMIMARU-SAN LIKES THAT SONG.
YES.
ON SOME KIND OF PIPE TO CALL FOR HELP.
HE BEAT IT...
Was that robot.
NO,
I'M SEEING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME NOW.
nearby then?
SO,
I'M SURE ...
THAT WE HEARD IT DIRECTLY.
IT'S CLOSE!
WE'RE ...
NEARBY,
Natsu-san!

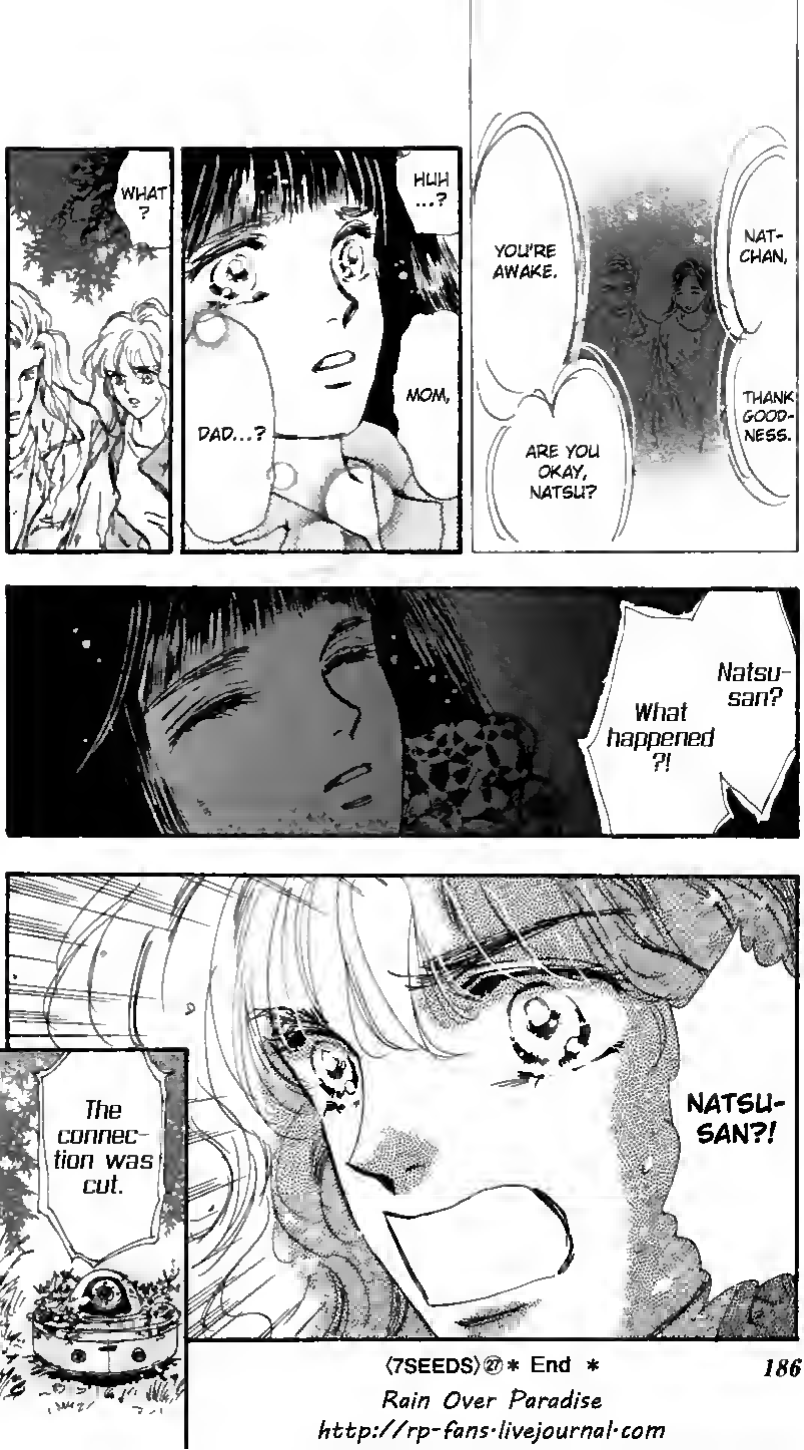
WE'RE COMING TO YOUR RESCUE!
SO STAY PUT!


NATSU-SAN, ARE YOU IN IMMINENT DANGER RIGHT NOW?
WHAT'S YOUR SURROUNDINGS LIKE?


POP
NATSU...

EVERY NOW AND THEN, SOME STRANGE OLD MAN POPS UP...
Old man?

OUR LIGHT WENT OUT, SO IT'S PITCH-DARK.
WE DON'T HAVE ANY WATER OR FOOD EITHER.
THERE'S A WATERWAY HERE THOUGH ...


WHAT ?
HUH ...?
DAD...?
MOM,
YOU'RE AWAKE.
NAT-CHAN,
ARE YOU OKAY, NATSU?
THANK GOOD-NESS.
Natsu-san?
What happened ?!
The connec-tion was cut.
NATSU-SAN?!

7Seeds

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